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MANUAL OF PRESBYTERY:

COMPRISING,

I.

PRESBYTERIANISM THE TRULY PRIMITIVE AND APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST;

OR, A VIEW OF THE HISTORY, DOCTRINE, GOVERNMENT, AND WORSHIP OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

BY SAMUEL MILLER, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY AND CHURCH GOVERNMENT IN THE PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY.

II.

THE CHARACTER AND ADVANTAGES OF PRESBYTERIANISM ASCERTAINED BY FACTS.

WITH AN APPENDIX

ON THE TESTIMONY OF THE FATHERS AND REFORMERS TO PRESBYTERY—THE MORAL TENDENCY OF CALVINISM, ETC.

BY THE REV. JOHN G. LORIMER,

MINISTER OF FREE ST. DAVID'S CHURCH, GLASGOW.

SECOND EDITION, ENLARGED.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

While I rejoice in the increased interest which questions of Church government are awakening, and the demand for fresh publications on the subject which that interest is calling forth, I have nothing to add to the statements of the former Preface, except that in this New Edition I have endeavoured to bring down the question of Presbytery to the present day, by supplying a Chapter on Presbytery as Favourable to Catholic Views of the Church of Christ; another on the Free Church movement, as furnishing a favourable illustration of the operation of Presbytery; and by also giving the most recent information respecting the progress of this form of ecclesiastical government in other Christian Churches. I trust that, by these and kindred additions, the reader will find the present Edition more worthy of his

attention. It is certain that within the last five years questions of Church rule have acquired a fresh importance in themselves, and in their bearing at once upon the civil and religious prospects of Christendom.

J. G. L.

Glasgow, *August*, 1847.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The question has of late been not unfrequently put, "What is the best book on the distinguishing characteristics of the Presbyterian Church—free from personal controversy—at once simple, short, and comprehensive, and adapted to general use?" This inquiry is not proposed by those members of the Church of Scotland—few it is believed in number—who, from ignorance, prejudice, or other causes, taking offence at her present struggle, have passed into another communion. These persons do not put themselves to the trouble of inquiry. They act not from principle, but from feeling, and probably, therefore, would not be moved by any investigation which they might institute. The inquiry originates with warmly attached friends of the Church, who are quite satisfied that her constitution is scriptural, and who are daily—unlike to the carelessness of other times—taking a deeper and deeper interest in her prospects, but who are anxious to inform themselves, and the youth of their families, more intelligently of the peculiar principles and institutions of the Presbyterian Church, than they have hitherto had a call for, or opportunity of doing.

It is probable that some may say, "The fewer such books as those referred to on denominational distinctions the better. In these days, when there is so much Infidelity, Popery, and Error in the world, and such vast continents to be reclaimed from Heathenism, would it not be well that all Christian Churches holding the Head, were united in heart, and joined together in the same labours?" In answer to this, we have to say, that controversy upon confessedly subordinate matters is to be deprecated, especially if it interfere with Christian union and co-operation; but we are not sure that in any circumstances it is warrantable to sink the peculiarities of Presbyterianism. Church government, discipline, and worship, hold an important connection with doctrine. They are in some respects the fences of its purity, and though in themselves inferior to the weightier matters of the Law and the Gospel, yet, as part of the revealed will of God, are of higher value than the most esteemed objects of earth. If men are to give an account of every idle word which they speak, they will certainly be held responsible before God for the care which they bestow in ascertaining the scriptural constitution of the Christian Church, and the zeal or remissness which they manifest in adhering to it after ascertained. Besides, the more closely that any Church is conformed in constitution to the will of its great Head, the richer blessing may be expected to rest on its ministrations.

Whatever may be the particular circumstances of the Church or of the world, requiring Christians, it may be for a time, to subordinate questions of ecclesiastical polity to more important and immediate duty, no one

who is alive to the present state of the Christian world, and much more, to the existing religious condition of British society, can question that this is not one of the seasons when Presbyterians should be silent upon the peculiarities of their faith. Unhappily, it is too well known that a large, influential, and rapidly increasing party have of late years appeared in the Episcopal, or, more correctly speaking, the Prelatical Churches, both of Britain and America, whose proclaimed doctrine it is, that the Presbyterian Church, and all Churches not Episcopal, have no authorized ministry or valid ordinances; in short, are no Churches of Christ at all, but mere religious communities, dealing in pretended services. In such circumstances, it is high time at least *to stand on the defensive*, and to vindicate the claims of the Presbyterian Church. Silence were not only treachery to the cause of truth where assailed, it would be equivalent to a cowardly acquiescence in insolent presumption. It were well that there were no need for controversy, or that less important controversies were occasionally absorbed in the common pursuit of higher objects; but when not merely the honour, but the very existence, of the Presbyterian Church as a Church of Christ is denied, and millions of the most intelligent and well-conducted professors of Christianity, not a whit inferior to their brethren in character, are summarily unchurched, it is a sacred duty, if not to expose the pretensions of assailants, at least calmly to state the claims of the Presbyterian Church, and to circulate the knowledge of these claims as extensively as possible among the members. It is only in this way, with God's blessing, that painful apprehensions

as to the validity of the ordinances of which they partake can be allayed, supposing them to be once excited. No candid Episcopalian can wonder, and much less be offended, at the members of other Churches standing forward in behalf of their denominational peculiarities. When so many of *his* brethren call in question all that is dear to *them*, it would be strange to find fault with their defending themselves: the efforts, too, which some Episcopalians are making to avail themselves of the trials of the Church of Scotland, to add to their numbers, is a call for such work as the present.

There is a further reason for Presbyterians being furnished with the knowledge of their peculiarities as a Church, and that is—the wide dispersion of not a few of them over the world. The migratory spirit of Scotland is proverbial. England, Ireland, and all the colonies of Great Britain, particularly the East and West Indies, Canada, and Australia, can bear witness to its strength. Removed from their mother Church, and often scattered in such small groups among the professors of other Churches, as not to have any opportunity for worshipping together, they are in considerable danger of losing sight of the peculiarities of the parent Church, and of either recruiting the ranks of other communions, or, in dislike of their forms and discipline, sinking into spiritual carelessness and neglect. In the midst of these disadvantages and perils, how important is it that they be well instructed in the divine claims of the Church in which they were born, and baptized, and educated; that they be able to carry the means of this knowledge along with them, so that greater efforts may be employed to furnish them with

divine ordinances, in the mode which to them is most interesting and effective; and that, instead of being hopelessly lost to the mother Church on leaving the Scottish shores, they may, as soon as opportunity offers, return from the communions in which, for a season, they may have been constrained by circumstances to worship. There can be little question, that a more familiar and intelligent acquaintance with the divine warrant for Presbyterianism, in its principles and institutions, would not only save the loss of many members on going abroad, but would lead to more vigorous exertions to provide them with the means of grace and salvation, and so conduce to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in foreign lands.

Though Presbyterians have frequently been accused of party spirit, perhaps there never was a religious body which, upon the whole, has been so free from it; one remarkable proof of this is, that, compared with other religious parties, they have done so little to record and spread the knowledge of their peculiarities. The history of Presbyterianism has long been imperfectly related, and is only *now* beginning to be, in some measure, adequately attended to. Its ecclesiastical polity has, if possible, been still less cared for. Presbyterians seem, in almost all ages, to have taken for granted that their principles and usages are so obviously accordant with Scripture and common sense, that they may be left to find their way unaided among professed Christians. Unless where specially provoked, they have done little by books to recommend the religious system to which they are attached. In this respect, there is a decided

contrast between them and the adherents of Episcopal and Congregational Churches. Where they have stood forward, it has almost always been, not as aggressors, but simply in self-defence; and hence the controversial air of their works, which, in its turn, has been injurious. Even the young men intended for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church have not (I allude here particularly to the Established Church of Scotland) been instructed at the universities in the principles of Presbytery. Though a distinct branch of study, it has been greatly neglected. Any improvement in this respect is of very recent origin.

But though, in a catholic spirit, almost carried to excess, Presbyterians have done little as they ought to have done to spread their peculiarities, it must not be imagined, that where they have entered the field, their success has been indifferent. Far from it. As often as their principles have been seriously assailed, whether by Episcopalians on the one hand, or Congregationalists on the other, they have given forth able and triumphant defences to the world. Not to refer to foreign Presbyterians of pre-eminent talent and learning—Beza in Switzerland, Blondel in France, Voetius in Holland, and many others—there never was a period in the history of the Church of Scotland, when Presbytery was assailed, in which, with God's blessing, there was not an ample and adequate defence. In early days, when Episcopacy, in an insidious form, was introduced by an unprincipled monarch, Calderwood, in his "Altare Damascenum," was found more than a match for all that could be alleged in its behalf. At a later day, in the middle of the seventeenth century, Gillespie, Rutherford, Baillie,

Fergusson, and Wood, most ably defended Presbytery against both Episcopacy and the Sectaries, or Independents of these days. The Presbyterian ministers of London, at the same period, waged a successful war in the south, and with the Independents of New England. After the Revolution of 1688, when the Prelatists, who had persecuted for thirty years, were overthrown, and, stung with defeat, assailed the Church of Scotland in all its aspects with a virulence of calumny almost unknown in the history of the Christian Church, her cause was nobly maintained, with blended piety, talent, and learning, by Rule and Forrester, Jameson and Lauder. Shortly after, Anderson, in answer to a new assailant, an apostate Presbyterian, published his able "Defence." When Independency, which had long slumbered, reared its head anew in the writings of Glass, it was immediately and powerfully met by Ayton of Alyth, in a publication which, if I have not been misinformed, was considered by the late Dr. M'Crie as the most complete work on Church government. In this connection, the honoured name of Willison of Dundee, who wrote both against Prelacy and Independency, might be introduced. For sixty years no book of any consequence was published in behalf of Presbytery in Scotland—a pretty plain proof of its non-sectarian character. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Congregationalism anew appeared, associated with the secession of one or two ministers from the Church of Scotland, Dr. Brown, now of Langton, published a full and learned "Vindication." Since then there has been no publication in Scotland of any moment, till the other day, when four

ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland stepped forth with two able defences of Presbytery, against the assaults of modern Episcopacy. In their own land, with the exception of Boyse of Dublin in the last century, there has been as little written in behalf of Presbytery as in this country. Nor is the Presbyterian Church of America an exception to the rule, if such it may be called. Dr. M'Leod, Dr. Mason, Dr. Miller, belonging to different branches of the Presbyterian body, have almost alone maintained the cause of Presbytery in the New World in modern times. Of late, something has been done at home to diffuse its principles, by the publication of Dr. M'Leod's "Ecclesiastical Catechism," and another still smaller, which, I rejoice to find, has, in the course of a few years, passed through eight editions, and obtained a circulation of 40,000 copies.

Still there is much need for a work to meet the wants of the Presbyterian Church, and of the age. Most of the larger works are scarce and inaccessible, perhaps repulsive, to the general reader; and of late years, with the awakened interest in behalf of religion, and of inquiry in connection with the constitution of Christian Churches, have become very expensive. Moreover, they are all mixed up with personal controversy, which prejudices many minds. Very small works, again, such as catechisms, though most useful in their own place, particularly *after* reading a larger work, have too much the air of a table of contents, and, from not detaining the mind sufficiently long upon the subject, do not give it such a firm hold of principles as is desirable to possess. Besides these disadvantages, none of the works,

whether larger or smaller, give a comprehensive view of the leading points involved in Presbyterianism; they are chiefly occupied with the article of Church government. I have long wished for something in a brief, but not too brief a form, which should comprehend some view of the history and doctrine of the Presbyterian Church, as well as of its government and worship, and that in an attractive and readable style. In the little work of the able and accomplished Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the Presbyterian College of Princeton, New Jersey, I think I have met with the desideratum. So far as it goes it is admirable, and only needs to be adapted, by means of additional information, to the state and prospects of the question in this country, to prove a most useful digest for every Presbyterian family. In the large additions which are given in notes, and a Second Part, and Appendix, as large as the original work, I humbly hope that some important and useful information has been supplied which may not only add to the value of Dr. Miller's publication, but, in some measure, direct the reader who wishes to pursue the subject farther for himself, to appropriate sources. A list of works is given in the Appendix.

The recommendations of the following treatise are peculiar. Besides its own merits, its accuracy, simplicity, brevity, comprehensiveness—embracing a sketch of the history, doctrine, government, and worship of the Presbyterian Church—and freedom from controversy, it is the work of one who occupies a leading place in one of the most important Presbyterian Churches of the world, who has devoted many years to the study of Church history,

and who has written largely and well on the subject of Church government. The treatise, too, was written at the request of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America, and has for years been adopted as one of the many useful little works to which that body gives currency by the sanction of its official approbation. In the United States it has had a circulation of many thousands, and continues in high estimation. In these circumstances, I have thought that a republication, with additional original matter, suited to this side of the Atlantic, would be a service to the cause of Presbyterianism, which has suffered from the want of such a work—a cause which I believe to be the cause of knowledge and truth, freedom, order, social happiness, virtue, religion, because founded on the Word of God.

Of course, in writing on such a subject, however shortly, it is impossible, let one's spirit be as catholic as it may, to avoid the appearance of assailing other denominations of Christians. One cannot state the case of Presbytery without seeming to reflect on its rival systems of government—Prelacy and Congregationalism—any more than the advocates of these forms can state theirs without seeming to disparage Presbytery and Presbyterians. Once for all, I beg to disclaim all rivalry and uncharitableness. The object of the following pages is to state and recommend the claims of Presbytery—not to run down other kinds of ecclesiastical government, and far less to provoke their adherents. Any reference to them is no more than what is essential, and is, I trust, conducted in a Christian and charitable spirit. I rejoice to think that there are multitudes of excellent

men in all Evangelical Churches; but when it is remembered how Presbytery has been, and continues to be, spoken of by many—that no system has in all ages been more calumniated and misrepresented (taken with other circumstances, no mean intimation of its divine origin); and, above all, that at the present moment an immense and growing party in the Church of England, throughout the three kingdoms, is denying that Presbyterians have a Church at all, and consequently can be saved, unless as the heathen are saved—it would not have been wonderful, nor perhaps very unwarrantable, that ministers whose ordination, office, and ordinances, have all been denounced as pretended, should feel and write strongly. This certainly would have been the case had Presbyterians treated Episcopalians or Congregationalists in the same way; but, as I have already said, every thing which savours of party spirit and uncharitableness is anxiously disclaimed. I am not conscious of such feelings; and as Presbyterians have all along been, as a whole, distinguished for their catholic spirit, I should be sorry that any work I republish, or any comments with which it is accompanied, should even seem to offend against the law of charity.

For the notes, except in the few cases where Dr. Miller's name is appended, I am solely responsible. To prevent misapprehension, however, I add the letter *L.*

May the great Head of the Church bless this humble effort to vindicate and diffuse important doctrines and ecclesiastical principles—which were held and exemplified in apostolic and primitive times—have been recognised more or less fully in all subsequent ages—which

the writer has no doubt will be triumphant in millennial days, and which, in a variety of ways, conduce to the divine glory.

J. G. L.

Glasgow, *January*, 1842.

PRESBYTERIANISM.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The Church of God, in the days of the apostles, as is well known, was not divided into different denominations. Even then, indeed, there were parties in the Church. The restless and selfish spirit of depraved human nature soon began, in different places, to display its unhallowed influence, either in the form of Judaizing claims, philosophical speculations, or turbulent opposition to regular ecclesiastical authority. In the Church of Corinth, though planted and nurtured by "the chiefest of the apostles," there were factious and troublesome members, who contended among themselves, and said, one to another, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ." Still the Church was one. The names, "Presbyterian," "Episcopalian," "Congregationalist," &c., &c., were unknown. All professing Christians, "though many, were considered as one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." The only popular distinction then recognised, as far as the professed followers of Christ were concerned, was between the Church and the heretics.

Not long after the apostolic age, when heresies had become numerous, when each of them claimed to belong to the Church, and when convenience demanded the

adoption of some term which might distinguish between the true or orthodox Church, and the various sects of errorists—the title of catholic (or general, as the term catholic signifies) was applied to the former; while the latter were distinguished by various names, derived either from the nature of their distinguishing opinions, or from the original authors or promoters of those opinions. It is well known, indeed, that the blinded and superstitious followers of the Bishop of Rome claim the title of catholic, as exclusively applicable to themselves. In their own estimation, they are *the* Church, the *only* true Church, the *catholic* or *universal* Church; and all the other classes of nominal Christians throughout the world are *heretics*, out of the way of salvation. This claim, however, in the estimation of all enlightened Christians, is as presumptuous as it is vain. That department of nominal Christendom, instead of being the only true Church, is considered by many as too far gone in corruption to be comprehended under the Christian name at all; and instead of there being no salvation out of her communion, the danger of eternal perdition is rather to those who are found within her pale. It is not doubted, indeed, that there are many pious individuals within that pale; but it is believed that they are placed in circumstances deplorably unfavourable to their growth in grace; and that the multitudes around them in the same communion, are immersed in darkness, superstition, and dreadful error, which place them in the utmost jeopardy of eternal perdition. This is that "Antichrist," that "Man of Sin and Son of Perdition," who exalteth himself above all that is called God, and who is yet to be "destroyed with the breath of Jehovah's mouth, and with the brightness of his coming."*

* There is no doubt that persons in the outward *communion* of the Church of Rome are saved. God's people are expressly required "to come out of her," which implies that some of them are in her. But they are saved, not as believing the doctrine and practising the unscriptural requirements of the Church of Rome—that were destructive; but as holding Protestant truth, and exemplifying its power—it may be, unknown to themselves—and in these circumstances remaining within her external pale. It is more than questionable whether the Church of Rome should be regarded or called

No particular denomination of Christians is now entitled to be called, by way of eminence, the catholic or universal Church. There are Churches, indeed, which bear a nearer resemblance to the apostolical model than others, and which deserve to be favourably distinguished in the list of Christian communities; but the visible catholic Church is made up of all those throughout the world who profess the true religion, together with their children. The Presbyterian, the Congregationalist, the Methodist, the Baptist, the Episcopalian, the Independent, who hold the fundamentals of our holy religion, in whatever part of the globe they may reside, are all members of the same visible community; and, if they be sincere believers, will all finally be made partakers of its eternal blessings. They cannot, indeed, all worship together in the same solemn assembly, even if they were disposed to do so. A physical impossibility forbids it; and, in many cases, prejudice and folly widely separate those who ought to be entirely united. Still, in spite of all the sects and names by which professing Christians are divided, there is *a visible Church catholic.* There is a precious sense in which the whole visible Church on earth is *one.* All who "hold the Head," of course, belong to the body of Christ. Those who are united by a sound profession to the same divine Saviour; who embrace the same precious faith; who are sanctified by the same Spirit; who eat the same spiritual meat; who drink the same spiritual drink; who repose and rejoice

a Church at all. The Reformers, who had grown up in her communion, certainly admitted the claim; but there is not only no authority for this from Scripture, but so far as its light goes, there seems to be an intimation that she is no Church. Rome is represented as occupying the outer court of the temple, left out of the measurement. She is spoken of not as Zion, but Babylon—not the Lamb's wife, but the mother of harlots. She is not to be reformed, but destroyed. If, as is well asked by Fuller, she be a true Church of Christ, what is that Church which fled from her persecution into the wilderness? Her proper name is Antichrist—the Roman apostasy; and yet some professing a purer faith glory in drawing their supposed title and pedigree from her! What can be more ludicrous than for parties to be drawing an "apostolic succession" from those who form no part of the Church of Christ at all? What advantage can be expected from such a genealogy?—*L.*

in the same promises; and who are travelling to the same eternal rest—are surely *one body—one* in a sense more richly significant and valuable than can be ascribed to millions who sustain and boast a mere nominal relation.*

But while we thus maintain the doctrine of the unity of the visible Church catholic; and while we rejoice in the assured belief that sectarian names, as they were unknown in the apostolic age, so they will be unknown among the members of the Redeemer's glorified body still, in this militant state, there *is* a separation, not merely nominal, but real and deplorable; a separation which interferes most deeply with the communion of saints, and which lamentably mars those precious opportunities of proximity and intercourse which too often, alas! become incentives to contention and strife, rather than to Christian love.

Amidst this diversity of sects and names, it becomes, to every intelligent and conscientious Christian, a most interesting question, Which of the various denominations, which bear the name of Christian Churches, may be considered as approaching nearest to the New Testament model? We freely acknowledge, indeed, as Churches of Christ, all who hold the fundamentals of our holy religion, and consider it as our duty to love and honour them as such; carefully avoiding all treatment of them that tends to the increase of strife and division, and that is contrary to "godly edifying." Still it cannot be doubted by any rational man, that *some one* of these denominations is nearer to the apostolic model, as a Church of Christ, than any of the rest. Which of the whole number this is, is a most serious question in the

* Among Evangelical Christians, the points of agreement are far more numerous and important than those of diversity. There is much more *real* harmony between Protestant Churches, manifold as may be their outward forms and aspects, than there is in the Church of Rome, where there is a great air of unity, or rather of external uniformity. This holds out the prospect one day of a much larger amount of visible union among Evangelical Christians than at present exists. In the meantime, the Church of Rome gains by the mere picture and pretence of unity, as in other cases she gains by deceiving men with the outward, as a substitute for the inward.—*L.*

view of every one who wishes to know the will of Christ, and who is desirous to be found walking in that way which was trod by inspired apostles, and in which they left the Church harmoniously walking, when they ceased from their labours.

It is the sincere belief of the writer of these pages, that the *Presbyterian Church*, taking the Word of God as its "only infallible rule of faith and practice," is more truly primitive and apostolical in its whole constitution, of *doctrine*, *worship*, *and order*, than any other Church now on earth. An humble attempt to evince the truth of this position will occupy the following pages.

For the fulfilment of the purpose in view, I shall endeavour, very briefly, to consider the *history* of Presbyterianism; its *doctrine*, its *order* or *form of government*, its *worship*, and its *comparative advantages*. In each of these respects, unless I am deceived, it will be easy to show that it approaches nearer than any other Christian denomination to the apostolical model.*

To prepare the way more fully for the ensuing discussion, it may be proper to state, that there are four distinct forms of Church order, each of which claims a scriptural warrant:—the Papal, or spiritual *monarchy;* the Episcopal, or spiritual *prelacy;* Independency, or spiritual *democracy;* and Presbyterianism, or spiritual *republicanism*. The first maintaining the necessity of one supreme, universal, infallible head of the whole Christian body throughout the world, as the authorized vicar of Christ. The second, contending for an order of clerical prelates, above the rank of ordinary ministers of the Gospel, who are alone, in their view, empowered to ordain, and without whose presiding agency there can be no regular Church. The third, holding that all

* There are some persons who are continually styling their Churches "apostolic," "primitive," &c., as if they were to become so by mere asseveration. It should be remembered, that every intelligent Christian believes the Church to which he belongs to be apostolic and primitive, and that he is as well entitled to claim these titles as others. Shrewd men will generally remark, that the Churches which claim these words most in speech, have the least title to them in reality.—*L.*

ecclesiastical power resides in the mass of the Church members, and that all acts of ecclesiastical authority are to be performed immediately by them. While, in the fourth and last place, Presbyterians believe that Christ has made all ministers, who are authorized to dispense the word and sacraments, perfectly equal in official rank and power; that in every Church the immediate exercise of ecclesiastical power is deposited, not with the whole mass of the people, but with a body of their representatives, styled elders; and that the whole visible Church catholic, so far as their denomination is concerned, is not only one in name, but so united by a series of assemblies of these representatives, acting in the name and by the authority of the whole, as to bind the whole body together as one Church, walking by the same principles of faith and order, and voluntarily, yet authoritatively, governed by the same system of rule and regulation.

Presbyterianism, then, is a term which primarily refers to the form of Church government. That is a *Presbyterian Church* in which the *presbytery* is the radical and leading judicatory; in which teaching and *ruling presbyters*, or *elders*, have committed to them the watch and care of the whole flock; in which all ministers of the word and sacraments are equal; in which ruling elders, as the representatives of the people, form a part of all ecclesiastical assemblies, and partake, in all authoritative acts, equally with the teaching elders; and in which, by a series of judicatories, rising one above another, each individual Church is under the watch and care of its appropriate judicatory, and the whole body, by a system of review and control, is bound together as one homogeneous community. Wherever this system is found in operation in the Church of God, there is *Presbyterianism*. Though there may be much diversity in the names of the several judicatories; and though, in the minuter details of arrangement, some variety may exist, still it is essentially the same. Thus the Reformed Churches in France, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Scotland, and Geneva, are all Presbyterian, notwith-

standing some minor varieties in the names and regulations of their judicatories. Wherever ministerial parity, the government of the Church by elders, instead of the mass of the communicants, and the authoritative union of Churches under courts of review and control, are found, there we have that ecclesiastical system which it is the object of the following pages to explain and recommend.

But although the term Presbyterian has a primary reference to the form of Church government, yet Presbyterian Churches were originally agreed, and have been commonly in all ages agreed, in a variety of other matters, which, we believe, are all warranted by the Holy Scriptures. It is to the whole system, then, of doctrine, government, and mode of worship, which now distinguishes the Presbyterian Church in the United States, that the attention of the readers of these pages is requested; and which, it shall be my aim to show, is set forth in the Word of God, "the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY OF PRESBYTERIANISM.

The essential principles of Presbyterian Church order were of very early origin. Those principles are the authoritative binding of the whole Church together as one body; and conducting this government, not by the entire ecclesiastical population, but by representatives, elected by, and acting on behalf of, the whole. That this mode of administering the affairs of the visible Church was adopted long before the coming of Christ, is certain, and can be doubted by none who intelligently and impartially read the Old Testament Scriptures. Even before the institution of the ceremonial economy, while the covenanted people of God were yet in bondage in Egypt, we find that they had their elders; that is, their men of gravity, experience, and wisdom, who were obeyed as heads of tribes, and rulers among the people. (Exod. iii. 16.) The powers committed to them, and exercised by them, are not particularly specified; but we may take for granted, with confidence, that their office was to inspect and govern the people, and to adjust all disputes both of a civil and ecclesiastical nature. Before the publication of the law from Mount Sinai, and anterior to the establishment of the ceremonial economy, Moses chose wise and able men out of the tribes of Israel, made them rulers over thousands, over hundreds, over fifties, and over tens. (Exod. xviii.) These rulers are elsewhere, in almost every part of the Old Testament, styled elders. To them, as we are expressly

informed, all the ordinary cases of government and discipline were committed. The same mode of dispensing justice and order among the people seems to have been employed after the institution of the Aaronic priesthood; during the time of the judges and of the kings; during the Babylonish captivity; and after the return of the captives from Babylon. At whatever time the synagogue system was adopted, it is evident that the plan of conducting government by means of a body of elders was universal through all the land of Judea, up to the time of the Saviour's advent. The synagogues were the parish churches of the Jews. There the ordinary worship and instruction of the Sabbath were conducted; and the excommunication of an individual from the body of the professing people of God was expressed by "putting him out of the synagogue." In these synagogues, the essential principles of Presbyterianism were universally established. The similarity, as to every important point, was exact. In short, during the whole tract of time embraced in the history of the Mosaic economy, we have complete evidence that the ecclesiastical government, as well as the civil, was conducted, under God, the supreme ruler, by boards of elders, acting as the authorized representatives of the people. To this mode of government, as is notorious, every city and every synagogue was accustomed. In no instance, in either Church or State, is a case recollected in which the population was called together to settle a dispute, or dispense justice between persons at variance. The representative system was universally in use. The work of administering justice was always done by a body of rulers or officers, commonly styled, amidst all the changes of dispensation, "elders of the people."*

Nor was this all. As each particular synagogue was

* The truth is, the representative system of government, whether on Church or in State, is founded on reason and necessity, as well as on Scripture. There is no other way of governing a large body of intelligent men. All cannot govern. Hence, with the progress of representative principles of government—from the progress of civilization—provision is made for the spread of Presbyterianism in the Christian Church. This holds out good prospects for the future.—*L.*

governed by a bench of elders, of which the bishop or "angel of the Church" was the presiding officer; so also, as the whole Jewish body was one—one catholic Church —there were always appeals admitted, in cases of alleged incorrectness of judgment, to the "great synagogue" at Jerusalem, where an opportunity was given for redressing what was done amiss. Nothing like the independency of particular synagogues was admitted or thought of. A system which bound the whole community together as one visible professing body was uniformly in operation.

The first converts to Christianity being all native Jews, who had been always accustomed to the exercise of government by benches of "elders," in the manner just specified; and this representative plan being so equitable, so wise, and so convenient in itself, no wonder that the same plan was adopted by the apostles in organizing the primitive Church. Accordingly, as in the account which the inspired writers give of the Jewish constitution, we read continually of the "rulers of the synagogue," and of the "elders of the people," as a body distinguished from the priests; so, when they proceed to give us an account of the organization and proceedings of the New Testament Church, we find the same language used in cases almost innumerable. We read of "elders being ordained in every Church;" of an important question being referred to a synod, made up of "apostles and elders;" of "elders who ruled well, but did not labour in the word and doctrine;" of the "elders of the Church being called together" to consider ecclesiastical questions; of the "elders of the Church being called for to visit and pray over the sick," &c.*

The question, whether the exact mode of conducting

* The Hebrews, on becoming Christian, would naturally follow the same forms of Church government to which they had been accustomed when Jews. Hence, if a change was intended by Christ, it was essential that they should be apprized of it; nay, the former polity would need to have been repealed, and they cautioned against recurring to it. Now, is there any repeal of, or caution against adopting, the old Jewish form of government? No: The inference is plain. In principle it was continued.—*L.*

the government and discipline of the Church, which we find delineated in the New Testament, is obligatory on Christians now, is one concerning which there is no small diversity of opinion. That an entire conformity to that model, in every minute particular, is essential to the existence of the Church, will be maintained by few, and certainly by no Presbyterian. None can doubt, however, that it is most expedient and safe to keep, as near as may be, to that plan of Church order which inspired men approved and left in use, when they ceased from their labours.* As to what that plan was, it would really seem almost impossible that intelligent and impartial readers of the New Testament should entertain different opinions. The moment we open the inspired history of the apostolic age, we find a style of speaking concerning the officers of the Church, and a statement of facts, which evince, beyond all controversy, that the model of the synagogue was that which was then adopted, and which was left in universal use when inspired men surrendered the Church to their successors. We find, preaching the Gospel, "feeding the sheep and the lambs" of Christ, and administering the Christian sacraments, the highest offices intrusted to the ministers of Christ. We find a plurality of "elders," by divine direction, ordained in every Church. In no instance, in the whole New Testament, do we find an organized congregation under the watch and care of a single officer. Farther: we find "bishop" and "elder," titles given, interchangeably, to the same persons; plainly showing that the term "bishop," in the apostolic age, was the title which designated the pastor or "overseer" of a single flock or Church.† We find in the New Testa-

* While God may, and doubtless does, acknowledge all forms where Gospel truth is held and professed, yet it may be expected that the blessing will always be richer, the nearer that any particular Church approaches to the standard of Scripture. We are not allowed, when favoured with the means of knowledge, to despise even the least of Christ's commandments with impunity. And there is a reward, also, for being faithful in searching out God's mind and will from his Word.—*L.*

† Episcopalians obtain an undue advantage over their brethren in other communions, from the word "bishop" in the English lan-

ment history no trace of Prelacy. All priority or pre-eminence among the ministers of Christ is expressly rebuked and forbidden.* There is evidently but one commission given to the authorized ministers of the word and sacraments. When the Saviour left the world, he commissioned no higher officer in his Church, speaks of no higher than he who was empowered to go forth and "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The ordaining power is manifestly represented as possessed and exercised by ordinary pastors, and as performed by the "laying on of the hands of the presbytery." There is not a solitary instance to be found in all the New Testament, of an ordination being performed by a single individual, whether an ordinary or an extraordinary minister. In all the cases which we find recorded or hinted at, a plurality of ordainers officiated. When Paul and Barnabas were designated to a special mission, it was by a plurality of "prophets and teachers of the Church in Antioch." (Acts xii.) When they went forth to preach and organize Churches, we are informed that they together "ordained elders in every Church." Timothy was ordained by the "laying on of the hands of the presbytery."† (1 Tim. iv. 14.) And even when the

guage having come to describe the overseer, not of a congregation, but of the clergy. This is not, however, its original meaning. It simply signifies an "overseer." Presbyterians and Congregationalists are equally entitled to use it as Episcopalians, and to apply it to their ministers as "overseers" of the Christian people. Where met with in Scripture, Christians should always remember that it means nothing but the pastor and overseer of the congregation, and that the same is its meaning in the earliest period of the primitive Church.—*L.*

* Among the twelve apostles there was perfect parity; there was no arch-apostle, like archbishop in modern times.—*L.*

† Paul, indeed, in 2 Tim. i. 6, says, "I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the *gift of God* which is in thee, by the putting on *of my hands;*" but the gift here spoken of is evidently not the gift of ordination, but of miraculous powers conferred by the apostle. A man could not well "stir up" his ordination; and it is immediately added, that God had not given the "spirit of fear," but of "power," alluding to the gift of miraculous power. The apostle seems to have bestowed miraculous gifts on Timothy, just as Ananias, who was no bishop, laid his hands on Paul, and he received the Holy Ghost." (Acts ix. 17.)—*L.*

deacons were set apart to their office, it is plain, from the narrative (Acts vi. 1–6), that a plurality laid hands upon them, with prayer and fasting. It is plain, too, that the whole visible Church, in the apostolic age, whether in Jerusalem or in Antioch, in Philippi or in Ephesus, was regarded as *one body*, all governed by the same laws, subject to the same authority, and regulated by the same judicial decisions. Thus, when a question arose which interested and affected the whole Christian community, it was decided by a synod of the "apostles and elders at Jerusalem;"* and the "decrees" of that synod were sent down to "all the Churches," to be registered and obeyed. Here was evidently an assembly of ministers and elders, acting as the representatives of the whole Church, and pronouncing judicial decisions, which were intended to bind the whole body. If this be not Presbyterianism, then there is nothing of the kind in Scotland, or in the United States.

When we pass from the New Testament to the earliest records of uninspired antiquity, the same form of Church order is everywhere apparent. The plan of ecclesiastical government disclosed by the Epistles of Ignatius, as actually existing in his day, is manifestly Presbyterian. He represents every particular Church of which he speaks, as furnished with a bishop or pastor, a bench of elders, and deacons; he continually employs language which implies that these officers were present in every worshipping assembly; and he most evidently gives us to understand, that these elders, with the pastor or bishop at their head, conducted the government and discipline of each Church. Clemens Romanus, contemporary with Ignatius, speaks in language of similar import. He represents bishops and presbyters—the Episcopate and the Presbyterate—as the same; and expressly states that the presbyters were "set over the Church" by the choice of the Church; and that to rise up in rebellion against them was considered as highly criminal. The testimony of Irenæus, who lived in the

* Not by the apostles or bishops alone, but also by the ruling elders.—*L.*

second century, is no less decisive in favour of our system. He continually applies the title of bishop and presbyter to the same men; speaks of "the succession of the Episcopate," through the presbyters and through the bishops, as the very same; nay, represents the Apostolical succession, the Episcopal succession, and the Presbyterial succession, as all identical. In short, he could scarcely have kept a more scrupulous and exact balance than he does between the dignities, powers, and duties connected with each title, and ascribed interchangeably to all. I might go on to quote Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, and other early fathers, as speaking a language of equivalent import. But there is no need of going into further detail. The truth is, for the first two hundred years after Christ, it is certain that neither Prelacy nor Independency was known in the Church of Christ. There is not a single record within that period which either asserts or implies it; but everything of a contrary aspect. Every flock of professing Christians had its pastor or bishop, with its bench of elders, by whom the government and discipline were conducted; and its body of deacons, by whom the funds collected for the relief of the poor were received and disbursed.*

In the third century after Christ, the aspect of things began to change. Some seasons, in this century of exemption from persecution, and of comparative outward prosperity, were marked by very sensible departure from the simplicity and purity of the preceding times. Heresies and schisms began to distract the congregations of God's professing people. The ministry and eldership of the Church declined both in zeal and faithfulness. The clergy became ambitious and voluptuous, and, as a natural consequence, full of intrigue and contention. The pictures given of their cupidity, mutual encroachments, and degrading strife, by Cyprian, by Origen, and by Eusebius, as in full operation in the third century, are truly of the most revolting character. Some have said, indeed, that the Church, in the Cyprianic age, presented,

* *Vide* "The Testimony of the Fathers and Reformers in behalf of Presbytery," in the Appendix.—*L.*

on the whole, one of the most satisfactory models of ecclesiastical perfection. Those who can entertain this opinion must judge of what is desirable in a Church by a very different criterion from that which the Bible furnishes. Let them impartially read the statements given by the writers just mentioned, and they will speedily alter their opinion.* Among such a clergy, an undue aspiring after preferment, titles, and places, might be expected, as a matter of course. Indeed, in such circumstances, it would have required a constant succession of miracles to prevent Prelacy from arising. Nor was this all. As the Church declined from her primitive simplicity and purity, some of her more serious ministers thought themselves warranted in resorting to other forms of attraction for drawing the populace into the Church. For attracting the Jews, they began to adopt some of the titles, ceremonies, and vestments of the temple service. They began to call the Christian ministry the "priesthood;" and, as a natural consequence, to speak of "priests" and "high priests," and "altars," and "sacrifices," &c., &c.; for all which, in reference to the Christian economy, there is not the smallest warrant in the New Testament. Other ecclesiastical leaders, for the purpose of conciliating and attracting the Pagans,

* We are indebted to recent controversies for more just views of the character of the Christian Church in the first three centuries than were formerly entertained. Even the great body of intelligent men took it for granted that the primitive Church, with a few exceptions, was not only irreproachable, but highly estimable. Recent investigators (and to no one is the Christian Church more obliged than to Mr. Taylor, in his "Ancient Christianity," in answer to the new Anglican school) have brought out a very different—most affecting and appalling result. Nothing is more fitted to soften the horrors of Popery, than, with Mr. Taylor's aid, to read the history of the primitive Church which the new school extol. In doctrine, worship, and practice, the picture is fearful. Well may any corruption in Church government rise out of such previous corruption in faith and manners. It were strange were it otherwise. Antichrist existed in the days of the apostles, and was to rise to dominion *gradually*. The history of the primitive Church is the picture of its progress, and that a rapid one. In addition to Mr. Taylor's work, the reader may consult with advantage the third chapter of Jameson's "Cyprianus Isotimus." It gives a well accredited and melancholy account of Cyprian, as well as of his contemporaries.—*L.*

introduced a variety of rites from the ceremonial of the heathen, intended to make the Christian ritual more splendid, dazzling, and alluring to those who had been the votaries of dumb idols, and whose chief objection to the religion of Christ was, that its worship was too simple and unadorned. The consequence was, that, toward the close of the third century, Prelacy was gradually and insidiously introduced. All orders of ecclesiastical men partook of the spirit of ambitious encroachment. The deacons, whom the apostles had appointed to be guardians of the poor, and of the temporalities of the Church, became too proud to discharge the appropriate duties of their office, employed "sub-deacons" to perform their official work, and, after a while, claimed, and had conceded to them, the power of preaching and baptizing. The presbyters or elders partook of the same spirit, and although the greater part of them had been chosen and set apart for ruling only; yet, as the discipline of the Church became relaxed and unpopular, and finally in a great measure abandoned, they all aspired to be public teachers, and turned away from their original work, to what they deemed a more honourable employment. The bishops, who had been originally overseers or pastors of single flocks, claimed authority over the congregations in their neighbourhood, which had branched out from their original charges; so that, by little and little, they became prelates—a new office covertly brought in under an old name. Nor did the principle of ambitious encroachment stop here. Metropolitans and patriarchs began to "lord it" over bishops. And to crown the gradations of rank, the Bishop of Rome, seduced by the imperial splendour which surrounded him, and countenanced by imperial power and munificence, came to be acknowledged as the supreme head, under Christ, of the whole Church upon earth, and the infallible interpreter of the Saviour's will.

This statement is confirmed by early Christian writers of the highest character, and who were nearly contemporary with the criminal innovation of which they speak. Thus Ambrose, who wrote about the year 376 after

Christ, in his Commentary on Eph. iv. 2, has the following passage:—"After Churches were planted in all places, and officers ordained, matters were settled otherwise than they were in the beginning. And hence it is that the apostles' writings do not, in all things, agree with the present constitution of the Church, because they were written under the first rise of the Church; for he calls Timothy, who was created a presbyter by him, a bishop—for so, at first, the presbyters were called." This passage is so plain, that it requires no comment. Still more unequivocal and decisive is the language of Jerome. "Among the ancients," says he, "presbyters and bishops were the same. But by little and little, that all the seeds of dissension might be plucked up, the whole care was devolved on one. As, therefore, the presbyters know that, by the custom of the Church, they are subject to him who is their president; so let bishops know, that they are above presbyters more by the custom of the Church, than by the true dispensation of Jesus Christ!" And in order to establish his position, that, in the apostolic age, bishop and presbyter were the same, he quotes precisely those passages from Scripture which Presbyterians have been accustomed, for three hundred years, to adduce in attestation of the same fact. The testimony of Augustine, bishop of Hippo, is to the same amount. In writing to his contemporary, Jerome, who was a presbyter, he expresses himself in the following language:—"I entreat you to correct me faithfully when you see I need it; for although, according to the names of honour which the custom of the Church has *now* brought into use, the office of bishop is greater than that of presbyter; nevertheless, in many respects Augustine is inferior to Jerome." (*Oper.*, tom. ii., epist. 19, *ad Hieron.*) It is worthy of notice, that Bishop Jewel, in his "Defence of his Apology for the Church of England," produces this passage from Augustine, for the express purpose of showing the original identity of bishop and presbyter, and translates it thus:—"The office of bishop is above the office of priest, not by authority of Scripture, but after the names of honour which

the custom of the Church hath now obtained." (*Defence*, 122, 123.) And, finally, to the same effect is the testimony of Chrysostom, who wrote toward the close of the fourth century. In his eleventh Homily on the Epistles to Timothy, he speaks thus:—"Having spoken of bishops, and described them, Paul passes on to the deacons. But why is this? Because between bishop and presbyter there is not much difference; for these also, in like manner, have committed to them both the instruction and the government of the Church; and what things he has said concerning bishops, the same also he intended for presbyters; for they have gained the ascendency only in respect to ordination; and of this they seem to have defrauded the presbyters." This passage of the eloquent father needs no comment. If there be meaning in words, Chrysostom distinctly conveys the idea, not only that ordination was the only point in respect to which bishops, in his day, had gained precedence over presbyters, but that they had gained even this by fraudulent means. This is the undoubted import of the word which he employs, and which we translate defraud. The same word is employed in 1 Thess. iv. 5: "That no man go beyond and *defraud* his brother in any matter," &c. And again, 2 Cor. vii. 2: "We have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have *defrauded* no man." And, be it remembered, no individual in the fourth century was more competent, in every respect, than Chrysostom, to say whether the pre-eminence which had been gained by bishops in his day rested on a divine warrant, or had been fraudulently obtained.

Thus it is evident—the ancients themselves being our witnesses—that, in the apostolic age, bishop and presbyter were the same; that the bishops were parish ministers; that, in every parish, a body of elders, with their pastor at their head, conducted the government and discipline; that, of course, Presbyterian parity in the Gospel ministry universally prevailed; that the rite of ordination was equally the prerogative of all who were empowered to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments;

that it was habitually performed "by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery;" that matters continued in this situation for more than one hundred years after the close of the apostolic age; that then clerical pride, ambition, and cupidity, began, more sensibly than in preceding times, to disclose their native effects; and that the pastors of the more opulent towns claimed special pre-eminence and powers, as peculiarly the successors of the apostles, which, by little and little, were admitted, and at length, permanently established. Thus were parochial bishops, or the pastors of single congregations, gradually transformed into diocesan or prelatical bishops, and, under an old familiar title, a new office artfully introduced; until, in the fourth century, when Christianity became the established religion of the empire, when the clergy were pampered by imperial bounty, defended by imperial authority, and their honours arranged according to the gradations of rank which were obtained in the State, all traces of primitive simplicity and purity were lost in the plans and splendour of worldly policy. Bishops became "lords over God's heritage," rather than "examples to their flocks."

We are not to suppose, however, that this departure from the apostolic model of Church order was universal. There were "witnesses of the truth," who, in humble retirement, bore a faithful testimony to the original system of discipline as well as doctrine. The simple-hearted Paulicians, in the seventh century, testified against the encroachments of Prelacy. They were succeeded, not long afterwards, by the Waldenses and Albigenses, who still more distinctly and zealously protested against all encroachments on Presbyterian simplicity. This is frequently acknowledged by many of the advocates of Prelacy, as well as others. *Æneas Sylvius*, afterwards Pope *Pius* II., declares, "They (the Waldenses) deny the hierarchy, maintaining that there is no difference among the priests, by reason of dignity or office." Medina, a learned Prelatist, in the Council of *Trent*, asserted that the doctrine of ministerial parity had been condemned in *Aerius*, and in the *Waldenses*, as

well as in others specified by him. *Bellarmine* acknowledges that the *Waldenses* denied the divine right of Prelacy. The Rev. Dr. *Rainolds*, an eminently learned Episcopal divine, professor of divinity in the university of *Oxford*, in the reign of *Elizabeth*, in writing on this subject to Sir *Francis Knollys*, declares: "All those who have, for five hundred years past, endeavoured the reformation of the Church, have taught that all pastors, whether they be called bishops or priests, are invested with equal authority and power—as, first, the *Waldenses;* next, *Marcilius Petavinus;* then *Wickliffe*, and his disciples; afterwards *Huss* and the *Hussites;* and last of all, *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Bullinger*, *Musculus*," &c. Their own historians, *John Paul Perrin*, and Sir *Samuel Moreland*, make statements, and exhibit documents, which fully confirm this representation. For although in some of the records of the *Waldenses*, certain *Seniors* are mentioned who performed particular duties for the sake of order; yet we are explicitly informed that *they claimed no superiority by divine right.* Accordingly, *Peter Heylin*, a bigoted Episcopalian, speaking of the Bohemian Brethren, a branch of the same people, and who are known to have received ministers from them, says, that "they had fallen upon a way of ordaining ministers among themselves, without having recourse to the bishop, or any such superior officer, as a superintendent." (*History of Presbyterianism*, pp. 409, 410.) The Rev. *John Scott*, the pious Episcopal continuator of "Milner's Ecclesiastical History," in giving a particular statement of the tenets and practices of the *Waldenses*, addressed by *George Manzel*, one of their most devoted ministers, to *Œcolampadius*, the celebrated Reformer, in 1530, represents that minister as stating, in the most unequivocal manner, that the different orders of bishops, priests, and deacons, *did not exist in their ministry.* (Vol. i., 139.) The Rev. *Adam Blair*, one of the latest and most profound writers on the history of the Waldenses, asserts and shows, with the utmost confidence, that their ecclesiastical government was not Episcopal. (*History of the Waldenses*, in two volumes octavo,

1833.) "Like Presbyterians and Independents," says this writer, "they denied the establishment of the different orders of ministers then received in the Western Church, such as bishops, archbishops," &c. (Vol. i., 176.) Again he says: "No form of ecclesiastical government in Great Britain seems *exactly* the same with the ancient Waldenses." Viewing them as having a constant moderator, Episcopalians think him like a bishop. But in regard to Episcopal consecration, Mr. *Acland*, an Episcopalian, informs us, that "this ornament of our Church establishment, as justly cherished by us, is unquestionably no longer preserved among the *Vaudois*." Viewing them as having a synod, and having a consistory or session in each congregation, they are Presbyterians; yet with this difference, that, in our country, synods and presbyteries have a new moderator every year, and the lay-elders are sent by the session in each congregation; while the Waldensian congregations meet and appoint the elder. The visits of the moderator to the different congregations, as appointed by the court, have nothing in them inconsistent with Presbytery. Mr. *Gilly* (also an Episcopalian) admits that the present Vaudois are nearer to Presbyterians than to any other form of Church government, only not so rigid." (Vol. i. 540, 541.) But the undoubted fact which places this whole subject beyond all question is, that after the commencement of the Reformation in *Geneva*, the Waldenses not only held communion with that Church, which we all know was strictly Presbyterian, but also received ministers from her, and, of course, recognised the validity of her ordinations in the strongest practical manner. This they could never have done, had they been in the habit of regarding the subject in the same light with modern Prelatists.

But the Waldenses were not merely Presbyterian as to the point of ministerial parity. According to their own most authentic writers, as well as the acknowledgment of their bitterest enemies, they resembled our beloved Church in almost everything. They rejected all human inventions in the worship of God—such as

the sign of the cross in baptism; fast and festival days; the confirmation of children and youth; the consecration of edifices for public worship, &c. We are also told that all their Churches were bound together by synods, which assembled once a-year; that these synods were composed of ministers and ruling elders, as in the Presbyterian Church; that their business was to examine and ordain candidates for the ministry, and authoritatively to order everything respecting their own body. We may say, then, with strict regard to historical verity, that in the darkest and most corrupt periods of the Church, Presbyterianism was kept alive in the purest, and, indeed, in the *only* pure Churches now known to have then existed.*

When the Reformation from Popery occurred, it is at once wonderful and edifying to observe with what almost entire unanimity the leaders in that glorious enterprise concurred in proclaiming and sustaining Presbyterian principles. Luther, Melancthon, and Bucer, in Germany; Farel, Viret, and Calvin, in France and Geneva; Zuingle and Œcolampadius, in Switzerland; Peter Martyr, in Italy; A. Lasco, in Hungary; Junius and others, in Holland; Knox, in Scotland; and a decided majority of the most enlightened and pious friends of the Reformation even in England—all, without concert, concurred in maintaining, that in the apostolic age there was no Prelacy (bishop and presbyter being the same); that the government of the Church by ruling as well as teaching elders was plainly warranted in Scripture; and that individual congregations were not to be considered as independent communities, but as so many members of the body to which they belonged, and to be governed by representative assemblies, for the benefit of the whole. It is true, these different leaders of the

* Even some intelligent Episcopalians, such as Faber, believe these Churches to be the Two Witnesses of the Book of Revelation; in other words, the only faithful witnessing Church for many ages; and yet they lay no claim to unbroken Prelatical succession, —yea, would have treated the fiction with contempt. What, then, becomes of succession as essential to the being of a Church? the only Church which deserves the name for centuries, has it not.—*L.*

Reformed Churches did not, all of them, actually establish Presbyterian order in their respective ecclesiastical bodies; but while all the Reformed Churches in France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Geneva, and Scotland, were thorough Presbyterians, not only in principle, but also in practice—even the Lutherans universally acknowledged that ministerial parity was the order of the apostolic Church, and also, that in the primitive times ruling elders conducted the government and discipline in all the Churches—still, many of them holding, as they did, that the Church was not bound to adhere, in every respect, to the apostolic model of government and discipline, but was at liberty to modify it according to exigencies, and as they might deem for edification, they adopted forms of regulation and discipline differing from each other, and differing, as they did not hesitate to confess, from the plan actually in use in the days of apostolic simplicity. The Church of England was the *only one, in all Protestant Christendom*, which, at the Reformation, adopted the system of Prelacy. This was occasioned by the fact that, in that country, the bishops, the court clergy, and the monarchs, took the lead in reforming the Church; and, as might have been expected, chose to retain the system of ecclesiastical pre-eminence which had been so long established. It is notorious, however, that this was done originally without any claim of divine right, with a spirit of affectionate intercourse and communion with all the non-episcopal Churches on the continent of Europe, and, after all, contrary to the judgment of large numbers of the most eminently pious and learned friends of the Reformation in that kingdom.*

It is very common for the more uninformed op-

* Parallel to this it may be mentioned, that the office of ruling elder, now peculiar to the Presbyterian Church, was, in the reign of Elizabeth, kept out of the constitution of the Church of England, into which there was every prospect of its being received—not on the ground that it wanted divine authority; no, that authority was conceded; but expressly on the ground that it would interfere with the queen's prerogative. In other words, the Reformation of the Church was sacrificed to narrow views of supposed political convenience. (*Vide* the Testimony of Bishop Burnet, quoted in the *Plea of Presbytery*, p. 362.)—*L.*

ponents of Presbyterianism to assert, that this form of ecclesiastical order was invented by Calvin, and first set in operation in the Church of Geneva. The ignorance of those who can make this allegation is indeed surprising! Passing by all that has been said of the palpable existence of Presbyterian order in the apostolic age; of its plain delineation in the Epistles of Ignatius, and in the writings of other fathers succeeding the pastor of Antioch; and waiving all remarks on its acknowledged establishment, as we have seen, among the pious Waldenses; it was undoubtedly in use in Switzerland and in Geneva long before Calvin had appeared as a Reformer, or had set his foot in either of those countries. The Rev. Mr. Scott, the Episcopal continuator of "Milner's Ecclesiastical History," before quoted, explicitly states, that as early as 1528, when Calvin was but nineteen years of age, and was wholly unknown in the ecclesiastical world, "the Presbyterian form of Church government was introduced into Switzerland;" and that the doctrine of ministerial parity had been uniformly taught by Zuingle, before the time of Calvin. In Geneva, likewise, before Calvin ever saw that city, his countrymen, Farel and Viret, had gone thither and commenced the Reformation upon Presbyterian principles. There, when he consented to cast in his lot with them, he found a "presbytery" established; and all that he had to do was to complete the system, by adding the bench of ruling elders for conducting the discipline of the Church; and even this he did not invent, but confessedly borrowed from that branch of the Waldenses called the Bohemian Brethren; although he evidently considered and represented it as distinctly warranted by Scripture.*

Presbyterianism, as it has long existed in Scotland, Holland, France, Geneva, and Germany, is, in substance, the same system, differing only in these several countries in minor details, and chiefly in the names and arrange-

* There is about as much truth in the assertion, that Presbyterianism was the creation of Calvin, as there is in the Popish allegation, that the doctrines of the Reformation originated with Luther. The answer is the same.—*L.*

ments of their several ecclesiastical assemblies. As those who commenced the Presbyterian Church in America, about the beginning of the eighteenth century, were chiefly emigrants from North Britain and Ireland; so the Church of Scotland was, more than any other, their model. Our whole arrangement of judicatories, and our whole ecclesiastical nomenclature, are, with few exceptions, borrowed from Scotland. What our ecclesiastical mother and we call the "Church Session," most of the Presbyterians on the continent of Europe call the "Consistory;" and what we call the "Presbytery," they call the "Classes." But, in general principles, we are all entirely agreed.

It would be doing gross injustice to Presbyterianism not to state, before closing this historical sketch, that it has been found, in all ages, friendly to "the rights of man"—conducive to the advancement, rather than the destruction, of civil and religious liberty. In making this statement, it is not meant to be maintained that no Presbyterian has ever been chargeable with the spirit or practice of persecution; but simply to say, that the general characteristic of the Presbyterian Church, as a denomination, is, that it has ever shown itself friendly to the diffusion of knowledge, to the rights of conscience, and to the enjoyments of rational liberty. It has often, very often, been a *persecuted, but never a persecuting Church.* The few examples of a contrary aspect which have appeared, were, in almost all cases, traceable either to individual mistake and infirmity, or to a momentary impulse of retaliation on bloody persecutors, when unexpectedly placed in the power of those who had been recently the victims of the most cruel oppression. The death of Servetus (even allowing all the agency in his death on the part of Calvin which the enemies of that illustrious man have been fond of ascribing to him, but which every well informed and impartial person knows cannot be allowed) had no real connection with Presbyterianism. The cases of undue severity exercised towards others, by Presbyterians in Great Britain, in the course of the seventeenth century, were almost all referable to the maxim, "that oppression makes even wise men

mad," and seldom rose much above the point of self-defence.* And as to the fierce unrelenting oppression recently experienced by evangelical men in Geneva, it is notoriously the spirit and the work of Unitarianism—the same spirit which, in the sixteenth century, prompted the leading Socinians, when Francis David, one of their own number, who believed with them the mere humanity of Christ, and therefore thought that divine worship ought not to be paid him—to throw him into prison, where he died.†

* It is truly wonderful that intelligent and conscientious men, while they make such an outcry concerning the case of Servetus, and study to place in so odious a light the severities inflicted on some of the Episcopal clergy by the Independents in England, during the Commonwealth, should entirely forget the instances of persecution, a hundredfold more frequent and severe, practised by Prelacy. Archbishop Cranmer was immediately active in dragging at least *four* persons to the flames, of whom two were women. Let the flames which consumed the amiable and pious Ann Askew, kindled through the misguided zeal of that prelate, shame those who would represent Calvin as the prince of persecutors. More than this, in the reign of Edward VI., he is also confessed by the historians of his own Church to have "procured the death" of Joanna Bocher and George Paris, labouring, and with success, to overcome the scruples of the young king in signing the warrant for burning them. Again, during the reign of James I., about twenty-five persons were hanged, drawn, and quartered, for their religion, in England. (See *Brook's History of Religious Liberty*, vol. ii. p. 403.) During the same reign (A.D. 1612), Bartholomew Legate and Edward Wightman were burnt to death for the same cause—the former under the immediate administration and authority of Dr. King, bishop of London, and the latter under the direction of Neile, bishop of Litchfield and Coventry, who are acknowledged to have had an immediate agency in bringing them to the stake. One would think, that in more than half a century after the affair of Servetus, the prelates of England might have become a little more enlightened with regard to the rights of conscience. But the miserable oppressions and cruelty exercised by Prelacy, and especially by Archbishop Laud and his coadjutors, and the still more cruel ejections, imprisonments, and massacres, both in North and South Britain, which marked the reigns of Charles II. and James II., are enough to sicken the heart, and ought for ever to impose silence on Prelacy with regard to persecution.—*Miller*. *Vide* Rev. Mr. Tweedie's "Calvin and Servetus." Johnstone, Edinburgh, 1846. This work consists of a translation of the Trial of Servetus, now first published. Nothing can more clearly show that the Reformer had no hand whatever in the condemnation or execution of Servetus—that both were the deeds of Calvin's enemies.—*L.*

† For a full discussion upon these points, the reader is referred to Part II., "Presbyterianism the Friend of Freedom, Civil and Religious."—*L.*

CHAPTER III.

DOCTRINE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The Presbyterian Church has been distinguished, in all ages, for laying great stress on the maintenance of pure doctrine. Such was eminently the case in primitive times, when it was enjoined upon them to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." And such was no less remarkably their characteristic, when, under the name of *Waldenses*, for five or six hundred years before the Reformation, they maintained a noble testimony in favour of the truth, in the midst of the deplorable darkness and corruption of the Papacy. At the period of the Reformation, the same zeal for the true doctrine of the Gospel of Christ led the faithful servants of God, in different parts of the Church, to form and publish their "Confessions of Faith," which remain to the present day as monuments of their fidelity to their Master's will. The people of whom we speak evidently regarded the pure doctrines of the Gospel as lying at the foundation of Christian character and hope; and while they attached no small importance to the government and discipline of the Church, they regarded as of far more vital importance those great fundamental principles of our common salvation which enter essentially into the character and life of Christian experience.

The system of doctrine of which the Presbyterian Church has solemnly declared her acceptance and belief is comprised in the "Westminster Confession of Faith," and the "Larger and Shorter Catechisms." These, we

believe, contain a summary of the doctrines taught in the Holy Scriptures; and, on this account alone, we profess to receive them, and require a solemn assent to the "Confession of Faith" on the part of all who are admitted to the pastoral office, or that of spiritual ruling in our body. This system of doctrine has received the distinctive title of *Calvinism*. Not because *Calvin* invented it; but because, among all the modern advocates of it, he was undoubtedly the most profound and able; and because it has suited the policy of some to endeavour to convey the idea, that the system in question was unknown until *Calvin* began to propagate and defend it.

In the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, there are many doctrines in which we entirely agree with our brethren of other denominations. In regard to all that is embraced in that formula concerning the being and perfections of God; the trinity of persons in the Godhead; the divinity, incarnation, and atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, &c., we may be said to hold substantially in common with all sects who deserve the Christian name. But with respect to the true state of human nature before God; the doctrine of sovereign, unconditional election to eternal life; the doctrine that Christ died in a special sense for his elect people; the doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ alone; of sanctification by the special and invincible power of the Holy Spirit; and of the perseverance of the saints in holiness—we differ very materially from many who bear the Christian name. In short, with regard to what are commonly called the "five points," discussed and decided in the Synod of *Dort*, our Confession is opposed to Arminianism, and coincides with the Calvinistic system maintained by that body.

It may be safely said that no theological system was ever more grossly misrepresented, or more foully and unjustly vilified, than this. It has been by multitudes defamed, as an abominable system, revolting to every dictate of reason, dishonourable to God, unfriendly to Christian comfort, adapted to beget discouragement and despair on the one hand, or presumption and licentiousness on the

other. The gross misrepresentations with which it has been assailed, the disingenuous attempts to fasten upon it consequences which its advocates disavow and abhor, and the unsparing calumny which is continually heaped upon it and its friends, have scarcely ever been equalled in any other case in the entire annals of theological controversy.* Those who have been accustomed to listen to this blind and unhallowed abuse, are respectfully requested to weigh with serious impartiality the following considerations :—

1. It is but justice to ascertain *what the real system is which Presbyterians believe.* The opponents of this system are wont to give the most unjust and shocking pictures of it. Whether this is done from ignorance or dishonesty, it would be painful as well as vain, at present, to inquire. They allege that it represents God as really the author of sin, and man as laid under a physical necessity of sinning, and then is damned for it, do what he can. They insist that our doctrine of depravity, and the mode of inheriting it, if true, destroys moral agency, reduces our race to the condition of mere machines, and, of course, makes all punishment of sin un-

* Excessive hostility and odium, directed against any system, unless it be plainly self-contradictory and ruinous, are by no means an unfavourable symptom, in so far as its divine truth is concerned. Such has been the treatment of the truth in all ages. Any system which so deeply abases the pride of man, and calls so loudly to a holy life as Calvinism, cannot but provoke the enmity of many a mind. To satisfy the reader that that system of interpretation is not so utterly monstrous as some may imagine, from the terms in which it is often spoken of, it may be mentioned, that the most illustrious philosophers—such as Bacon, Leibnitz, and Newton, and many others—on the ground of reason and philosophy, apart from Scripture, substantially came to the principles of Calvinism. That the system, too, is thoroughly logical, hangs together like a golden chain (another presumption of its truth), may be gathered from the fact, that when a mind has got hold of one of its first principles, there is no stopping short of the whole. Scott, the well-known Scripture commentator, keenly opposed to Calvinism, was anxious to enter the lists of controversy with his friend, Mr. Newton of London, against it; but Newton, while he disclaimed controversy, with his superior discernment, saw that Scott had got hold of one of the first links, and assured him that he would soon come to the same conclusions with himself—a prediction which was amply realized. It is well known that Scott afterwards became one of the ablest advocates of Calvinism against a prelate of his own Church. —*L.*

just and absurd. In short, they contend that the view which we give of the plan of salvation, makes it a system of heathenish fate, or of refined Antinomianism, equally destructive of holiness and comfort; and that, under the guise of free grace, we build up a fabric of favouritism on the one hand, and of fixed necessity on the other—at once making God a tyrant, and man a passive subject of his arbitrary will. But is it true that Presbyterians embrace any such system as this? Nothing can be farther from the truth. It is a shameful caricature, which has no correspondence with anything but the perverted pictures of prejudice and bigotry. We abhor such sentiments just as much as our uncandid accusers.

The truth is, it would be difficult to find a writer or speaker who has distinguished himself by opposing Calvinism, who has fairly represented the system, or who really appeared to understand it. They are for ever fighting against a *caricature*. Some of the most grave and venerable writers in our country, who have appeared in the Arminian ranks, are undoubtedly in this predicament. Whether this has arisen from the want of knowledge, or the want of candour, the effect is the same, and the conduct is worthy of severe censure. The writer of these pages is fully persuaded that Arminian principles, when traced out to their natural and unavoidable consequences, lead to an invasion of the essential attributes of God, and, of course, to blank and cheerless Atheism. Yet, in making a statement of the Arminian system, as actually held by its advocates, he should consider himself as inexcusable, if he departed a hair's-breadth from the delineation made by its friends. The system itself is one thing—the consequences which may be drawn from it another.

Without pretending to go over all the points of Calvinism in detail, let it suffice to say, that the system which Presbyterians profess to receive, is of the following character and amount :*—That the Gospel finds all

* To prevent misapprehension, it may be well to notice, that there is no *necessary* connection between Calvinism and Presbytery.

men by nature dead in trespasses and sins, destitute alike of the image and favour of God, and incapable of regaining either, in virtue of any strength or resources within themselves; that the plan of man's recovery from this state of rebellion, depravity, and sin, is, from beginning to end, a system of mere unmerited grace; that it was the wonderful, unprompted grace, or undeserved love of God, which, in the eternal counsels of peace, contemplating man as fallen, devised a stupendous plan of redemption from the guilt and power of sin; that in these eternal counsels and purposes he regarded the whole human race as equally fallen, and as equally undeserving on account of their sins; that, however, in his sovereign mercy, he resolved to save a portion of them; that he was prompted to this choice, not by any foresight of faith and obedience on the part of the elect, because their faith and obedience are his own sovereign gift, but by the mere good pleasure of his will, that they might be to the praise of the glory of his grace; that God was under no obligation to provide deliverance for any of our race; that he might justly have left us all to perish in our iniquity, as he did the fallen angels, toward whom he was, surely, guilty of no injustice; that he was pleased, however, in the exercise of amazing mercy, to provide a plan of pardon, and of restoration to life and blessedness; that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but obtain everlasting life. We believe, farther, that not only the providing of this Saviour, but the disposition, in each individual to accept of him, is all of grace; that is, the free, unmerited gift of God. We have no doubt, that all mankind, left to themselves,

Presbyterian Churches, like others, sad to tell, have occasionally declined from sound doctrine; but this was generally after they had practically abandoned their peculiarities of Church government. Decay was caused in a great measure by the abandonment. The Confessions of Faith of all Presbyterian Churches have been Calvinistic—generally higher in this respect than others. There is no instance, so far as I remember, of a Presbyterian Church *setting out* as an Arminian, and far less as a Socinian Church; and it may be safely said, with few exceptions, that there is a growing revival of Calvinistic principles among all the Presbyterian Churches of the world.—*L.*

would reject this great salvation, and that it is discriminating and all-conquering grace which inclines any to receive it. We are persuaded farther, that as salvation is all of grace, and as it is evident from Scripture, and from daily observation, that all men are not believers, and, of course, that all are not saved, so it was not God's original intention to save all—for it is granted that he does not save all; and that which he now does, if he be such a God as the Bible represents him, he always intended to do. We believe that known unto God are all his works and ways from the beginning; and that all the dispensations of his grace, as well as of his providence, and, among the rest, the effectual calling and salvation of every believer, entered into his plan from all eternity; "yet so," as our Confession of Faith declares, "as that thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established." In short, the sum of our belief, in reference to this great economy, may be expressed in one sentence—"All that is evil in man is of himself, and to him belongs the blame of it;" "and all that is good in him is of God, and to him belongs the praise of it." We are aware that this system of belief may be perverted, misrepresented, and made perfectly odious, by drawing consequences from it which we utterly reject and abhor. For such perversions and unjust inferences, the advocates of no creed are responsible. Let any one carefully and dispassionately read over the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, and he will soon perceive that the professed representations of it which are daily proclaimed from the pulpit and the press, are wretched slanders, for which no apology can be found but in the ignorance of their authors.

2. Consider *the ample support of this system which is found in the Word of God.* The first question which every sincere and devout inquirer after truth will ask, is, "What saith the Scripture?" Our own reasonings and cavils, when thrown into the scale against revelation, are nothing. "Let God be true, and every man a liar."

Now, it is confidently believed, that when we reverently open the book of God, and impartially examine what it teaches concerning the important point which distinguish our doctrine from other forms of belief, we shall find the divine authority clearly and strongly in favour of that creed which Presbyterians profess to receive.

Those who doubt this, are requested seriously, and with prayer, to ponder the following Scriptures:—

"By one man sin entered into the world. By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." (Rom. v. 18, 19.) "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! yea, we establish the law." (Rom. iii. 23–31.) "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For if it be of works, it is no more of grace, otherwise grace is no more grace." (Eph. ii. 8, 9; Rom. xi. 6.) "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." (Acts xv. 18.) "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." (Acts xiii. 41.) "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 2.) "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." (Eph. i. 4–7.) "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified,

them he also glorified. What shall we say, then, to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 29–39.) "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (2 Tim. i. 8, 9.) "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 6.) "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." (John x. 27, 28.) "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." (Isa. liv. 10.) "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou hast not received? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. iv. 7.) "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." (John xvii. 11–15.) "Father, I will that they also whom thou

hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John xvii. 24.) "Even so, then, at this time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." (Rom. xi. 5–7.) "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." (Ps. cx. 3.) "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." (Ezek. xxxvi. 25–27.)

The reader of these pages is earnestly requested to ponder seriously the foregoing Scriptures; to examine them in their connection; to interpret them with the same candour and simplicity with which he is wont to interpret other writings; and then to say whether they do not manifestly support those peculiar doctrines for which Presbyterians are so much reproached and vilified? The question is, not whether the ingenuity of Biblical criticism may not torture these passages into a different meaning, but whether the plain, natural, and obvious meaning be not that which will sustain the system in support of which we are wont to quote them? If it will, the controversy is at an end; for whatever is plainly contained in Scripture we are bound to receive.

3. It is worthy of notice, that the system of doctrine maintained by the Presbyterian Church is *the same in substance with that which was maintained by the witnesses for the truth, and by the great body of the Reformers and which has generally been styled*, "*The doctrines of the Reformation.*"

There is probably no class of professing Christians more remote than Presbyterians from a disposition to appeal to human authority as a test of truth. Our ecclesiastical formularies, as well as our history, proclaim that we consider the *Scriptures* as the infallible rule of faith and practice; and that we are distinguished from Prelatists and others, by contending for this principle in reference to every department of the Christian system. Yet it is, undoubtedly, an interesting fact, well worthy of being noticed, and adapted to confirm our confidence in the system which we have embraced, that *all* the great and good men who took the lead in bearing testimony against error, and in reforming the Church from the corruptions of the Papacy, however diverse in their views on other points, agreed, with scarcely an exception in adopting and maintaining that system of doctrine which is popularly denominated Calvinism, and which many of its bigoted opponents are so ignorant as to imagine that Calvin invented. The Waldenses, those far-famed witnesses of the truth, whom all Protestants profess to venerate, but whom few, alas! appear to understand and follow, not only adopted, in substance, the whole Presbyterian government and discipline, as we have seen in a former page, but also all the leading features of our system of doctrine. The following extract from one of their Confessions is conclusive. The eleventh article is in these words: "God saves from that corruption and condemnation, into which all have fallen, those whom he has chosen from the foundation of the world, *not for any disposition, faith, or holiness, which he foresaw in them, but of his mere mercy in Jesus Christ his Son; passing by all the rest, according to the irreprehensible reason of his free will and justice.*" And in one of their ancient catechisms, they tell us, that "the real Church of Christ consists of the *elect* of *God*, from the beginning to the end of the world, by the grace of God, through the merit of Christ, gathered together by the Holy Spirit, *and fore-ordained to eternal life.*" (See Gilly's *Narrative of Researches among the Waldenses*, Appendix. See, also, *Sir Samuel Mor-*

land, pp. 40, 48, &c.; *Milner*, iii. pp. 440, 441.) The same general system was undoubtedly adopted by John Wickliffe, the "morning star of the Reformation;" by John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, his companion in faith and in martyrdom. "The distinguishing tenet of Wickliffe in religion," says Milner, "was, undoubtedly, the election of grace." And the same writer gives an account of Huss and Jerome, which precludes all doubt that, in their general system, they followed Wickliffe, who was a disciple of Augustine.

When we come down to the time of the Reformation, the same general fact continues to be unquestionable. It is notorious that Luther, long before Calvin was known as a reformer, or even as a theological writer, publicly maintained the doctrines of the divine decrees and human impotence as thoroughly as Calvin ever did. The proof of this is so complete, that no one well informed in the history of those times will dare deny it. Melancthon, the friend, coadjutor, and survivor of Luther, also held in substance the very same system. Those who read the statements, and the extracts from his writings, which appear in the pages of the Rev. Mr. Scott, the Episcopal continuator of "Milner's Ecclesiastical History," can no longer doubt of this. Melancthon assured Calvin that he concurred with him in his creed; and Calvin, in his Preface to Melancthon's book of "Common Places," recommends the work as one in the doctrines of which he concurred. Zuingle, the apostolical reformer of Switzerland, it is well known, adopted the same system. After all that has been alleged to the contrary, nothing is more certain than that he maintained the doctrines of the depravity and moral impotence of human nature, the sovereign election of grace, and the perseverance of the saints in holiness, as decisively and zealously as any of his contemporaries. Yet Zuingle died before Calvin was ever heard of as a friend to the Reformation, and before he had published a sentence in reference to it. Of course, the Swiss Reformer was indebted for no part of his creed to the ministry or the writings of the illustrious pastor

of Geneva. The same may be said of Bucer, of Peter Martyr, of Bullinger, of Bugenhagius, of Junius, and in general of all the leaders of the Reformation on the continent of Europe.

When we pass over to Great Britain, precisely the same fact appears. Hamilton, Wishart, Archbishop Cranmer; Bishops Ridley, Hooper, and Latimer; Archbishops Grinda and Whitgift; John Knox; and, in short, *all* the Reformers of any name, both in North and South Britain, were *doctrinal Calvinists.* This fact, indeed, has been denied, but not by any candid, well-informed man. The proof of it is complete. Let any one read the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, especially the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and seventeenth—let him, particularly, ponder well the last mentioned article, which treats directly of the doctrine of predestination, and ask whether it is possible fairly to give it any other than a Calvinistic interpretation. I am not, indeed, ignorant that prejudice and bigotry have sometimes contended that this seventeenth article is decidedly anti-Calvinistic in its import; and as proof of this, the qualifying clause towards the end of it is cited as sufficient evidence. Now, it so happens that that qualifying clause is nearly copied from Calvin's Institutes; and the latter part of it is a literal translation of that Reformer's caution against the abuse of this doctrine! Again: let him who entertains a doubt on this subject, read the celebrated Catechism of Dr. Nowell, which was reviewed, corrected, formally approved, and ordered to be published, as containing a summary of true doctrine, by the same Convocation which formed and adopted the Thirty-nine Articles, and which is acknowledged by the bitterest enemies of Calvin to be decisively Calvinistic. Let him read the Lambeth Articles, drawn up and signed by Archbishop Whitgift, and also subscribed by the Archbishop of York, and at least three other leading prelates, and by them transmitted to the University of Cambridge, as containing doctrines "corresponding with those professed in the Church of England." Let him recollect that for more than half a century after the

Reformation was established in England, Calvin's Body of Divinity, commonly styled his "Institutes of the Christian Religion," was publicly received and studied as a standard of orthodoxy in both the Universities; and that, by a Convocation held at Oxford, the work was recommended to the general study of the nation.

Now, is it not remarkable that all the great and good men who took the lead in the Reformation, men of different languages, habits, and prejudices, many of them absolute strangers to each other, not merely in Geneva, but in Great Britain, in France, in Germany, in Holland, in Switzerland—nay, wherever the darkness of the Papacy was dissipated, and her corruptions abandoned—all, all, with scarcely an exception, should become advocates in substance of that system which we denominate Calvinism; that, appealing to the Bible as the common repository and standard of gospel truth, they should, with almost entire unanimity, without concert, and however divided as to other points, be so harmoniously united in the great doctrines of sovereign grace, that they have ever since been styled, emphatically, "*The doctrines of the Reformation?*" How shall we account for it, that brethren who claim to be well-informed, should represent this system as originating with Calvin, and peculiar to him and his followers, when, to say nothing of its scriptural authority, every one knows it was, in substance, espoused by Augustine, a thousand years before Calvin was born; by all the witnesses of the truth during the "dark ages;" and by all those venerable men, whose piety, wisdom, and devotedness, have been the theme of gratitude and praise for three hundred years? Above all, how shall we account for it, that brethren, who find no language too strong by which to express their profound veneration for the spirit, the opinions, and the services of Cranmer, Parker, Whitgift, and other distinguished prelates, who, under God, conducted and completed the Reformation in England; while they are never tired of vilifying the character, and denouncing the creed of the venerable Calvin, whose name those very lauded men never mentioned but with epithets of the highest

honour; whose writings they made their text-books for students of theology; and whose person and ministry they regarded as among the most glorious lights of Christendom? *

4. As the system of doctrine taught in our Confession is most in accordance with Scripture, and was common to all the Reformers, so it has, to say the least, *quite as few difficulties attending it as any other system.*

It is not pretended that the Calvinistic system is free from all difficulties. When finite creatures are called to scan either the works or the revealed will of an Infinite Being, they must be truly demented if they expect to

* For additional information on the above points, the reader is referred to an interesting and able work of the Rev. Augustus Toplady, a well-known minister of the Church of England in the last century, entitled "Historic Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England." He shows that the doctrines of Calvinism, with more or less clearness, have been the faith of the true witnessing Church of God, from primitive, down through Popish times, onwards to the Reformation; that they were the faith of all the Reformed Churches at that period; and that Arminianism, in all ages prevalent in the Church of Rome, is a comparative novelty in the Protestant Church, and has been always attended with the worst results, moral and religious.

In addition to the ample information which he supplies on the Calvinism of the Christian Church, it may be stated, that even the Scottish Episcopalians, who have generally been reputed anti-Calvinistic, were not always of this character. The Confession of Faith which the bishops drew up in 1616, is rigidly Calvinistic. Many of them, in the course of the next twenty years, may have, and doubtless did, become unsound, and for this, among other reasons, were deposed by the General Assembly of 1638; but the Confession stands as their professed faith; and in 1692, not less than one hundred and eighty Scottish Episcopal ministers, in the name of the Episcopal body, applied for admission to the Church of Scotland, a Church which is strongly Calvinistic, on the ground of subscribing the Westminster Confession.

Toplady, in 1773, in reference to the above work, says, "Though I have, for fifteen years past, been solidly and clearly convinced of the original and intrinsic Calvinism of the Established Church of England, still I did not know that the subject was supported by such a vast confluence of positive authorities, until the furious opposition of the Methodists forced me to take a nearer and more exact view of the argument." Again, "On a retrospective survey of the whole matter, I myself stand astonished at that profusion of evidence which pours from every quarter in favour of the main point. My own collections, to go no farther, viewed in the aggregate, absolutely surprise me." (*Works*, p. 340.)—*L.*

find nothing which they cannot comprehend. Accordingly, when we undertake to solve some of the difficulties which that system of Christian doctrine usually styled Calvinism presents, it cannot be denied that "such knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain unto it." How to reconcile what the Scriptures plainly reveal, on the one hand, concerning the entire dependence of man, and on the other, concerning his activity and responsibility—how to explain the perfect foreknowledge and predestination of God, in consistency with the perfect freedom and moral agency of his intelligent creatures—is a problem which no thinking man expects fully to solve. But the question is, Are there fewer difficulties attending any other system? Especially, are there fewer difficulties attending the Arminian or Pelagian systems, which are commonly the resort of those who reject Calvinism? There are not; nay, instead of being less, they are greater, far greater, both in number and magnitude. The writer of these pages rests in the Calvinistic system with a confidence daily increasing, not only because the more he examines it, the more clearly it appears to him to be taught in the Holy Scriptures; but, also, because the more frequently and impartially he compares the amount of the difficulties on both sides, the more heavily by far they seem to him to press against the Arminian and Pelagian schemes.

It is easy—and in the estimation of the superficial and unreflecting, it is conclusive—to object, that Calvinism has a tendency to cut the nerves of all spiritual exertion; that if we are elected, we shall be saved, do what we *will;* and if not elected, we shall be lost, do what we *can.* But is it not perfectly evident that this objection lies with quite as much force against the Arminian or Pelagian hypothesis? Arminians and Pelagians grant that all men will not be actually saved; that the salvation or perdition of each individual is distinctly foreknown by God; and that the event will certainly happen as he foresees that it will. May not a caviller then say, with quite as much appearance of justice in this case as in the other, "The result as to my salvation is known and

certain. If I am to be saved, no anxiety about it is necessary; and if I am to perish, all anxiety about it would be useless?" But would Arminians consider this objection as valid against their creed? Probably not. Yet it is just as valid against *theirs* as against *ours*. The truth is, Arminians and Pelagians, by resorting to their respective schemes, do not really get rid of one particle of the difficulty which they allege against the Calvinistic system; they only place it *one step farther back*, but must meet it in unimpaired strength after all. If there be a God who is endowed with perfect foreknowledge, and who is, and always has been, acting upon a *plan*, of which he knew the end from the beginning—and there is such a being, or there is no God—then all the difficulty which lies against the doctrine of sovereign, unconditional predetermination, lies equally, and in all its unmitigated force against the doctrine of foreknowledge, and certain futurition; and all the shocking consequences with which they charge our system of belief are quite as legitimately chargeable on their own.

No other proof of this is needed than the subterfuges to which Arminians and Pelagians have resorted, in order to avoid the difficulties which they have felt pressing on their schemes. Some have denied the possibility of God's foreknowing future contingencies, alleging that such foreknowledge cannot be conceived or admitted, any more than his power of doing impossibilities, or doing what involves a contradiction. Others have denied the plenary foreknowledge of God, alleging that there are many things which he does not choose to know; the latter making the Divine ignorance of many future things voluntary, while the former consider it as necessary. Pelagians, to get rid of the same difficulties, take refuge in the principle that the Most High is deficient in power as well as in knowledge; that he would be glad to have less natural and moral evil in his kingdom than exists; would be glad to have many more saved than will be; but is not able to fulfil his wishes, and is constantly restrained and thwarted by his own inability.

Those who wish to see a specimen of the difficulties

to which good men feel themselves reduced in the course of their opposition to Calvinism, may see a remarkable one in the Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. There they will find an amiable and pious man driven to the necessity of borrowing from the Socinian camp a *denial of the essential omniscience of God*, because he saw that this attribute, if admitted, would unavoidably land him in the peculiarities of Calvinistic theology! A more painful example of prejudice, and of subserviency to the dictates of a favourite system, can scarcely be produced in the annals of Christian piety!

Are not these consequences even more shocking than the worst which its adversaries charge on the Calvinistic system? Do not the allegations, that God is not omnipotent—that he is not omniscient—that he is not acting upon an eternal plan—that his purposes, instead of being eternal, are all formed in time, and, instead of being immutable, are all liable every day to be altered, and are, in fact, altered by the changing will of his creatures—that there is no certainty of his predictions and promises ever being fulfilled, because he can neither foresee nor control future contingencies—that it is his express design to save all men alike, while yet it is certain that all will not be saved—that he purposes as much, and does as much for those who perish as for those who are saved, but is, after all, baffled and disappointed in his hopes concerning them—that he is certain of nothing, because he has determined on nothing, and is not able to do all his pleasure;—I say, do not these allegations shock every serious mind? Are they not equally contrary to Scripture, to reason, and to all the hopes of the pious? Yet they have all been either actually avowed by the opponents of Calvinism, or they follow unavoidably from the principles which they assume. The truth is, we abandon the ground that Jehovah is acting upon an infinitely wise and eternal plan; that he is ordering all things according to the counsel of his own will; and that his people are not their own saviours, but indebted to his sovereign grace for every

real good which they possess or hope for;—the moment we abandon this ground, we abandon all that is solid and tenable, and if we would follow up unavoidable consequences, must plunge into the gulf of Atheism.

The same train of remark may be applied to the difficulties which attend the doctrine of original sin. The humiliating *fact*, that all men are by nature sinners; that their nature is corrupt—that is, that there is such a tendency to sin in all the children of men, that no mere man of all the human family ever failed of falling into it—is not only taught in Scripture, but is notorious to universal observation. Now, the question is, How shall we account for this fact? Presbyterians, speaking the language of Calvinism, of their Confession of Faith, and, above all, as they think, of the Bible, say that Adam was constituted the covenant-head of his posterity; that they were to stand or fall with him; that when he fell all his posterity, in that first transgression, sinned in him, and fell with him; in other words, that the guilt of his sin, in virtue of a sovereign and righteous constitution, was imputed to his posterity—that is, it was set to their account; they incurred the same forfeit as if they had themselves committed it. And hence, as Adam, by that transgression, became mortal, lost the moral image of God, and incurred the penalty of a corrupt nature; so all his posterity, in consequence of their covenant relation to him, come into the world mortal, depraved, and guilty, and liable to the same penalty in all its extent which fell upon him. This, Presbyterians profess to believe, is the meaning of those Scriptures which declare, "In Adam all die." (1 Cor. xv. 22.) "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners"—"By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." (Rom. v. 18, 19.) They do not suppose, indeed, that there is here any transfer of moral character, or any transfusion of Adam's act into his posterity; but that, in consequence of the covenant relation in which he and they stood, they are treated *as if* they had themselves committed the sin by which our race fell. This, and this only, is the imputation of the

sin of our first parents, for which Presbyterians contend.

Pelagians, revolting at this view of the subject, hope to remove all difficulty by saying, that man's nature is not corrupt; that all men come into the world in the same state of entire innocence that Adam was when first created; and that to suppose men to be born with a corrupt nature, would be dishonourable to God, and inconsistent with moral agency. They acknowledge, however, that all men are in fact sinners; and that all begin to sin as soon as they become capable of moral action. But is any difficulty which is supposed to attend the Calvinistic doctrine really removed, or even diminished by this hypothesis? Is it more honourable to God, or less revolting to our sense of justice, to represent the whole human family, without the adoption of any covenant arrangement, or representative principle, as brought into being, and placed by their Creator in circumstances in which not one of their number ever fails of falling into sin?

Arminians, or semi-Pelagians, also rejecting the Calvinistic doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, but, at the same time, perceiving that the Pelagian hypothesis is utterly unscriptural, take another method of removing the difficulty. They tell us that Adam was not constituted the covenant head of his posterity, and that the guilt of his first sin was not imputed to them; but yet that, in virtue of their connection with him, and descent from him, they come into the world mortal, and infected with a sinful nature; but that it is on account of their own sin, and not that of Adam, that they are guilty and exposed to any penalty. Is it not plain, however, that this hypothesis, instead of removing the difficulty which its advocates suppose to lie against the Calvinistic doctrine of original sin, rather increases it? On what principle is it, according to them, that mortality and a depraved nature descend from Adam to his posterity? Not, it seems, in virtue of any covenant relation between them; not on the principle of representative headship; but of an arbitrary constitution,

ordering it so by a mere act of authority. And while they reject the doctrine of imputation, they are constrained to confess, that in consequence, somehow, of Adam's sin, all his posterity come into the world with a depraved nature, which, if not removed, must lead to everlasting destruction. And is this no evil, no penalty? But if being born in this condition be a penalty, and a heavy penalty too, why was this penalty inflicted upon them? It cannot be said that it was on account of their depravity; for this would be to make their depravity the procuring cause of itself. No imputation of our first father's sin! and yet acknowledge that, in consequence of that sin, some of the most awful inflictions are sent upon us that can affect moral and immortal beings! No imputation! Whence, then, the fact that all the posterity of Adam are born depraved, and liable to death? How came this calamity upon them? Surely, while the term is rejected, we have here the essence of all the imputation for which we contend! Alas! we never fail to augment difficulties, and introduce additional perplexity, whenever we deviate from the simple statements of God's Word!

5. The very *same objections were made in apostolic times* to the doctrines of grace, as taught by the inspired Paul. In the 9th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the doctrine of sovereign, distinguishing grace, is discussed professedly and at length. The apostle boldly announces the language of God to be, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." He then asks, "Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid." Still, the apostle is aware that a blind caviller may continue to object. He therefore adds—"Thou wilt say, then, unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?" The very language and scope of this objection show that the apostle meant that his doctrine should be understood in a Calvinistic sense, for upon any other ground the objection would be irrelevant.

How does he reply to it? Does he retract or disavow that view of the subject on which the cavil is evidently founded? Not at all. He attempts no mitigation or softening. His reply is—"Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?" Here the apostle has anticipated the whole force of the Arminian objection. It cannot be pushed farther than he has carried it in a single sentence. No addition has ever been made to its force by the most ingenious gainsayer. Yet the apostle answers it, not by an attempt to explain, to bring down to human comprehension, or to show that his statements had been misconstrued. Nothing like it. He resolves the whole into the supremacy, the sovereignty, and the incomprehensibleness of God and his counsels, and calls upon all to yield to this great and all-governing principle, closing, as he does in another place when on the same subject, with that memorable exclamation—"O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

6. It is a strong argument in favour of that creed which the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church exhibits, that every serious, devout professor of religion, however decided as an Arminian or semi-Pelagian he may be in preaching, or in conversation, *never fails to be a Calvinist in prayer*. So far as my observation has gone, the most zealous advocates of Arminianism almost always lay aside their favourite opinions when they pour out their hearts in prayer, under a feeling sense of their dependence and their unworthiness. How many examples have we of this in thousands of pulpits,

and in thousands of published volumes, in which the preaching is decidedly semi-Pelagian, while the prayers are quite as decidedly Calvinistic! The reason of this inconsistency is perfectly evident. In preaching and conversation, errorists argue to maintain a point; in prayer, they supplicate grace. In the former, they are actuated by the spirit of controvertists; in the latter, they feel their entire dependence as creatures, and their lost and perishing condition as sinners. "A prayer," says one, "upon Arminian principles, and into which the peculiarities of that system were introduced, we have never seen, and never heard. It would be a theological curiosity sufficiently daring in its structure; but we venture to say, no man of Christian humility and devotion will be found to carry it into the presence of his God." There—there the sinner ever acknowledges his weakness and depravity; disclaims all merit; confesses his multiplied sins; adores the sovereign, unmerited mercy of God; ascribes to his grace every good desire and hope; glorifies his universal government over all his creatures and all their actions; and ascribes the plan, the execution, and the consummation, of that deliverance for which he hopes, to the sovereign, undeserved grace of God abounding through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Now here is the very essence of Calvinism;—not, indeed, of those monstrous absurdities and impieties in which its adversaries are ever fond of dressing it up; but of that sober and scriptural system which is found in our formularies, and for which all whom we acknowledge as Calvinists have ever contended.

7. Finally, it is worthy of serious inquiry, whether the *moral influence of the Calvinistic system has not been found in all ages more pure and happy than that of any other.* For this appeal no apology is necessary. That system which is ever found connected with larger measures of the spirit of prayer, and of humble, habitual, deep devotion; that system which is ever productive of more holy living, and more active Christian benevolence than any other—we may confidently say, without pre-

sumption, is most agreeable to Scripture, and, of course, most worthy of being embraced. This allegation, it is presumed, will not be denied. For, although the opponents of this system at one time charge it with having a tendency to promote licentiousness, yet much more frequently and unanimously they charge it with being austere, over strict in its abstinence from worldly pleasures, and standing unnecessarily aloof from the various forms of public amusement. Is it not notorious that the followers of *Augustine*, of the Paulicians, of *Claudius* of *Turin*, of the Waldenses, and of *Wickliffe*, *Huss*, and *Jerome*, in the dark ages, were far more pure in their morals, devout in their habits, and separated from a corrupt and idolatrous world, than any of their contemporaries? Will it not be granted by every intelligent reader, that during the first half century after the Reformation was established in England, when no one doubts that nineteen-twentieths of the Protestant clergy in that kingdom were avowed Calvinists, the state both of piety and of morals was unspeakably better than during the latter half of the seventeenth century, when Arminianism had, among the majority, taken its place? What was the character of the two thousand "ejected ministers," in the reign of Charles II., who were almost to a man Calvinists? Were they not characteristically, as a body, the most pious, pure, diligent, and exemplary servants of Christ that England ever saw? Is it not universally admitted, that the state of piety and of morals has ever been far more pure in Scotland than in England, and pre-eminently in those districts and congregations in Scotland in which Calvinism has maintained a steady reign? And can any part of the world be named, in which, for nearly a hundred years after its settlement, purer morals reigned than in New England, in which, as every one knows, during the greater part of that period, a Calvinistic creed almost universally prevailed?*

The following remarks, by a distinguished divine of

* For some additional facts on the moral tendency of Calvinism *vide* the Appendix.—*L.*

the Church of England who professes not to be a Calvinist, are as just as they are striking:—

"Does not this opinion (of the immoral tendency of Calvinism) in a great measure originate from a mistaken conception of what Calvinism is? Those who would impute all these practical evils to the operation of Calvinism, appear to suppose that the belief of the Calvinist, by which he admits the doctrine of personal election, necessarily includes also an assumption of his own election. The Calvinist, *properly so called*, is no enthusiast. He believes, indeed, in the eternal purposes of God, as to the salvation of the elect; but as to the hopes of his own salvation, and of his individual interest in those purposes, he professes to obtain it by the evidences which he possesses of his being himself in a renewed and justified state. He knows from the Word of God that the saints are 'chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit,' no less than 'the belief of the truth;' that they are 'predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ,' and 'created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that they should walk in them.' And hence he feels that it is only so long as he experiences the sanctifying influences of the Spirit in his own heart, so long as he himself in some degree reflects the image of Christ, and walks, imperfectly indeed, but yet sincerely, in good works, that he can have any scriptural grounds for concluding that he is one of God's elect, and will have his portion with the saints. This is true Calvinism. And where is the tendency of this doctrine to make its followers slothful or confident, negligent of the means of grace, or inattentive to moral and relative duties? While the practical evils which Calvinism is charged with producing, are so prominently and studiously exhibited to view by many of its opponents, let us not omit, on the other hand, to do justice to this calumniated system, nor forget the abundant good which it is not only capable of accomplishing, but which it actually does accomplish. I have no doubt, but that some of the sublimest feelings of pure and spiritual delight which are ever experienced on earth, are those of which the

Calvinist partakes, when, in his secret retirement with his God, 'the Spirit bearing witness with his spirit,' and shining on his own gracious operation on the heart, he meditates on the wonderful and unspeakable privileges to which, through Christ, he sees himself entitled; and, resolving all the blessings which have been already received, or are prepared for him hereafter, into the eternal purpose and electing love of God his Father, and absorbed in a holy contemplation of the divine counsels and perfections, he lies prostrate before the throne ot grace, in deep humiliation, and with overwhelming joy. I do not say that others have not their peculiar feelings of spiritual delight; but these are his. And does he rise from such communion with his God, without enlarged desires and resolutions of more seriously devoting himself to the Divine favour, of more decidedly overcoming the flesh and the world, and of more faithfully doing the will and advancing the glory of his Lord and Saviour? Facts and experience reply to this inquiry. Among no denomination or description of professing Christians is there to be found a larger portion of humble, pious, and devoted servants of God—persons of a truly Christian spirit, zealous of good works, and exemplary in every duty and relation of life—than among those who hold the Calvinistic tenets. I am sure that your observation and your candour will fully justify this statement. And, therefore, so far as this system is to be judged of by its actual effects, I think that, on a candid re-consideration of the subject, you will be induced to abandon your objection, and to admit that it was founded on an erroneous and partial view of the subject." *

In the same general strain, Bishop Burnet, who was avowedly a moderate Arminian, expresses the following opinion as to the practical advantages of Calvinism: "A Calvinist is taught by his opinions to think meanly of himself, and to ascribe the honour of all to God; which lays in him a deep foundation for humility; he

* "Letters addressed to a Serious and Humble Inquirer," &c., by the Rev. Edward Cooper, Rector of Hamstall Ridware.

is also much inclined to secret prayer, and to a fixed dependence on God."

A very able and learned foreign lawyer, the author of the article *Predestination* in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, though he is evidently no friend to Calvinism, makes the following declaration:—"There is one remark which we feel ourselves bound in justice to make, although it appears to us somewhat singular. It is this: That from the earliest ages down to our own days, if we consider the character of the ancient Stoics, the Jewish Essenes, the modern Calvinists and Jansenists, when compared with that of their antagonists, the Epicureans, the Sadducees, the Arminians, and the Jesuits, we shall find that they have excelled, in no small degree, in the practice of the most rigid and respectable virtues; and have been the highest honour of their own ages, and the best models for imitation to every age succeeding. At the same time, it must be confessed, that their virtues have in general been rendered unamiable by a tinge of gloomy and severe austerity."

After all, however, that can be said in favour of that doctrinal system which it is our happiness and honour, as a Church, to receive; however demonstrative its scriptural support, and however manifest its deduction from the character of an infinitely great, wise, and good Governor of the universe; it will never cease, while human nature remains as it is, to be hated, reviled, caricatured, ridiculed, and rejected, by a large majority of the professedly religious world. It is too humbling to human pride; it calls for too much self-denial, self-renunciation, and submission of the mind and the heart to heavenly teaching; demands too much spirituality and withdrawment from worldly pleasures and amusements, not to be opposed by the mass of mankind, and even by the mass of professing Christians, who have little taste for the spirit of the gospel. These very doctrines were thus treated in the days of the inspired apostles, who first taught them in their fulness; and, even in our own communion, those of our members who are most tinctured with the worldly spirit, are ever found most apt to quarrel with

the peculiarities of our creed. The most deeply humble, enlightened, and spiritual Christians are, in all ages and Churches, ever found to be those to whom the doctrines of free and sovereign grace, for substance, as collected in our standards from the Scriptures of truth, are most precious, and in whose view they are most glorious.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The Church, being a social body, called out of the world, and constituted by the authority of Jesus Christ, indispensably needs a form of government. No society can exist in purity and peace without order. And no order can be maintained without authority, laws, and a set of officers to apply the laws, and administer the form of order which may have been adopted. Our Master in heaven has commanded "his body, the Church," to preserve within her borders purity of doctrine, and holiness of conversation; and for this purpose to "warn the unruly," to admonish the careless, reclaim the wandering, and to cut of those who are obstinately corrupt, either in faith or practice. All this she was commanded to do, and actually did perform, while all the civil governments of the world were leagued against her, and the fires of martyrdom were kindled on every side.

Now, it is obviously impossible for the Church to fulfil these obligations, without such an ecclesiastical constitution, such a system of laws, and such a body of officers, as will enable her to apply to her members that authority which her Master has vested in her, "for edification, and not for destruction." Hence the necessity of organizing the Church under some distinct and definite form. It is not asserted, or believed by us, that any one form of government is essential to the existence of the Church; but simply, that if purity and peace be maintained, there must be some form adopted; and that

that form which is derived from the Word of God, is undoubtedly the best, and binding on all.*

The Presbyterian Church claims to derive her form of government from the Holy Scriptures. She is persuaded that the New Testament most distinctly presents, as existing in the apostolic Church, all the three features which constitute the peculiarities of her ecclesiastical polity, viz., the parity of her ministers, the government of the Church by ruling elders, and the attainment of unity and co-operation by courts of review and control. She aims to avoid the unauthorized pretensions of Prelacy on the one hand, and the lax, inadequate scheme of Independency on the other; and to adopt that system of ministerial equality and efficient representation in the government of the Church, which at once guards, as far as possible, against the encroachments of clerical ambition, secures the rights of the people, and provides for the exercise of pure and wholesome discipline in the most edifying manner.

I. In the first place, we reject the claim of *Prelacy*. Our Episcopal brethren contend that in the Christian Church there are three orders of clergy—bishops, presbyters, and deacons; that the first only have power to ordain, and the last to preach, and administer the sacrament of baptism alone. We maintain, that all ministers of the gospel who are empowered to administer the Word and sacraments, are *officially equal*, and authorized to perform the highest acts of ecclesiastical power. We believe, in a word, that there is but one order of gospel ministers authorized in the New Testament; that the title of bishop was constantly applied in the apostolic age, and for a considerable time afterwards,

* The condescending consideration of our Lord for his people, which he often manifested when upon earth, would warrant the same expectation. Surely in their Church estate, now that he is in heaven, he would not leave them without government, the prey of anarchy and confusion—destructive of the very ends of a Church altogether. Having loved the Church, and purchased it with his blood, and now managing all the affairs of the world in subordination to its interests, we may be sure he would appoint a government, and not leave so important a matter to accident or the invention of erring men.—*L.*

to the ordinary pastors of particular Churches; and that setting up a superior under this title, as exclusively possessed of the power of ordaining, is a departure from the primitive model—a usurpation for which there is not the smallest warrant in the Word of God.

Our Episcopal brethren, indeed, freely acknowledge that the title of "bishop" is never employed in the New Testament, in a single instance, to designate that class of officers to which they now exclusively apply it. They, with one voice, grant that all that we read in the apostolical writings concerning bishops, is to be regarded as pertaining to presbyters, or the ordinary pastors of Churches; in other words, to what they call the "second grade" of ministers. They allege, however, that the apostles occupied a place of ecclesiastical pre-eminence in the primitive Church; that they alone, while they lived, were endowed with the power of ordination; that, as they deceased, their pre-eminence was transmitted to certain successors; that to these successors of the apostles, the title of bishop, which had before, while the apostles lived, been given to presbyters, began to be appropriated; and that ever since the apostolic age this title has been confined to prelates;* to those who succeeded to the apostolical pre-eminence, and who, like the apostles, exclusively possess the power of ordination.

But to no part of this claim does the New Testament afford the least countenance. It is manifest that ordination was not confined to the apostles officially and technically so called; for nothing can be plainer, than that Barnabas, Timothy, and Titus, who were not apostles in the appropriated sense, were invested with the ordaining power, and actually and abundantly exercised it. It is equally manifest, that when the apostles ceased from the Church, they left no successors in that peculiar and pre-eminent office which they filled during their lives. "The apostolical office," says Dr. Barrow, an eminent Episcopal divine—"The apostolical office, as such, was personal and temporary, and therefore, ac-

* See Bishop Onderdonk's "Episcopacy Tested by Scripture," p. 12.

cording to its nature and design, not successive nor communicable to others, in perpetual descendence from them: it was, as such, in all respects extraordinary, conferred in a special manner, designed for special purposes, discharged by special aids, endowed with special privileges, as was needful for the propagation of Christianity, and founding of Churches. To that office, it was requisite that the person should have an immediate designation and commission from God; that he should be endowed with miraculous gifts and graces; that he should be able, according to his discretion, to impart spiritual gifts; and that he should govern in an absolute manner, as being guided by infallible assistance, to which he might appeal. Now, such an office, consisting of so many extraordinary privileges, and miraculous powers, which were requisite for the foundation of the Church, was not designed to continue by derivation, for it contained in it divers things which apparently were not communicated, and which no man, without gross imposture and hypocrisy, could challenge to himself." *

Such is the judgment of this learned and able Prelatist concerning the foundation of the whole argument before us. There is not the semblance of support, then, to be found in Scripture for the alleged transmission of the pre-eminent and peculiar powers of the apostles to a set of ecclesiastical successors. As men endowed with the gifts of miracles and inspiration, who were, prior to the completion of the New Testament canon, constituted the infallible guides of the Church, they had no succes-

* Pope's Supremacy, p. 79.

It is quite plain that the apostolic office was a temporary one, in force till the canon of Scripture was completed. After this, it became unnecessary, and therefore ceased. "When I shall see," says James Owen, in his "Plea for Scripture Ordination," p. 56, "bishops immediately sent of God—infallibly assisted by the Holy Ghost—travelling to the remotest kingdoms to preach the gospel in their own language to the infidel nations, and confirming their doctrine by undoubted miracles, I shall believe them to be the apostles' true successors in the apostolic office." Why do Prelatists not contend for *successors* to the prophets and evangelists, as well as to the apostles? They were equally "given" by Christ for the edification of the Church; but this would expose the absurdity of the claim.—*L.*

sors; nor can the remotest hint be found in Scripture that they had, or were ever intended to have, any such successors. But as ministers of Christ, empowered to go forth preaching the gospel and administering Christian sacraments, they had successors, and these successors were, manifestly, all those who were empowered to preach the gospel, and administer the sacramental seals of discipleship; for in the final commission which the Saviour gave to the apostles, and which must be considered as embracing their final and highest functions, they are sent forth to disciple all nations, and to baptize them "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" and it was in immediate connection with the command to discharge these ordinary duties, that the promise which is considered as pointing to the ministerial succession was given:—"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." If the friends of Prelacy could produce even the semblance of testimony from Scripture that the ordaining power is something more sacred and elevated than that of dispensing the gospel, and administering sacraments; if they could produce the least hint from the New Testament, that the powers possessed by the apostles were afterwards divided, and that one class of ministers succeeded them in certain pre-eminent powers, not mentioned in their final commission, while another class succeeded them only in respect to lower and more ordinary functions, their cause would rest on some plausible ground; but there is not a syllable in Scripture which gives the most distant intimation of either of these alleged facts. It is not so much as pretended that a passage is to be found which gives a hint of this kind. Accordingly, when we ask the advocates of Episcopacy whence they derive their favourite doctrine, that diocesan bishops succeed the apostles in the appropriate powers and pre-eminence of their apostolical character, they refer us to no passages of Scripture asserting, or even hinting it; but to some equivocal suggestions and allusions of several Fathers who wrote within the first four or five hundred years after Christ. The writer most frequently

quoted by our Episcopal brethren for this purpose, is *Theodoret*, who flourished about the middle of the fifth century, and who speaks thus:—"The same persons were anciently called bishops and presbyters; and those whom we now call bishops, were then called apostles. But in process of time, the title of apostle was appropriated to those who were called apostles in the strict sense, and the rest, who had formerly the name of apostles, were styled bishops. In this sense, Epaphroditus is called the apostle of the Philippians; Titus was the apostle of the Cretians, and Timothy of Asia." On this testimony several remarks may be made:—

1. It is not the testimony of Scripture, but the dream of a writer four centuries after the apostolic age, in whose time the Church had become very corrupt, and in whose works much superstition and error are found.

2. No one doubts that, in Theodoret's time, Prelacy had obtained a complete establishment, and that he alleges principles and facts in relation to the priesthood in his day, which none but Papists are prepared to sanction.

3. It is very certain that the Fathers who flourished nearest to the apostolic age, generally represent presbyters, and not prelates, as the successors of the apostles. Ignatius, in particular, who was contemporary with the last of the apostles, expresses himself again and again in the following language:—"The presbyters succeed in the place of the bench of the apostles." And again: "In like manner, let all reverence the presbyters, as the sanhedrim of God, and college of the apostles." And again: "Be subject to your presbyters, as to the apostles of Jesus Christ our hope." And, once more: "Follow the presbyters as the apostles." Which shall we believe, Ignatius or Theodoret? Beyond all doubt, neither is to be trusted in relation to a matter which receives no countenance from Scripture. It is notorious, too, that Irenæus, a Christian father who flourished toward the latter part of the second century, repeatedly speaks of presbyters as being the successors of the apostles. In other places he speaks of the same persons as bishops,

and under that title also represents them as the successors of the apostles. And this he does, not once only, but several times, as if his object were to show that, according to the representation of the New Testament, bishop and presbyter were the same.

4. Augustine, a writer earlier than Theodoret, more learned, and of higher authority, expressly declares that the apostolical office was above that of any bishop. (*De Baptis. contra Donatis.*, ii. 1.)

5. And, after all, to what does Theodoret's statement amount? Why, only that in the fifth century, such claims and such language as he presents were common. Who doubts this? But does he say that the New Testament authorizes any such statement? He does not. Nor, if he had, could we possibly believe him with the Bible in our hands? The truth is, no such fact as this argument supposes is stated or hinted at in Scripture. It everywhere represents the apostles as extraordinary officers, who, in their peculiar qualifications and authority, had no successors; but who, in respect to that office which is perpetual, are succeeded by all regularly authorized ministers of the gospel. And to give any other view of the subject, is an imposition on popular credulity. Accordingly, this whole argument for the superiority of bishops, drawn from the plea that they are the peculiar and exclusive successors of the apostles, in their official pre-eminence, has been wholly abandoned by a number of the most distinguished divines of the Church of England, as invalid and untenable.

The next argument commonly urged by our Episcopal brethren in support of Prelacy, is, that Timothy was evidently, in fact, bishop of Ephesus, and Titus of Crete; and that this furnishes, of course, a plain example of an order of ministers superior to common pastors. This alleged fact is a corner-stone of the Episcopal fabric; and unless it can be supported, the whole edifice must fall to the ground.

But for this alleged Prelacy of Timothy and Titus, there is not only no positive proof, but there is not even a shadow of it, in the whole New Testament. There is

no evidence whatever that either of them ever had a fixed pastoral charge at Ephesus or Crete. There is no evidence that either of them ever performed the work of ordination alone. One of them, while at Ephesus, was expressly directed to "do the work of an evangelist," and there is not the slightest intimation that either acted in any higher character. There is no hint that they performed any act, to which any regular minister of the gospel is not fully competent. In short, the whole Episcopal argument drawn from the charge to Timothy and Titus is destitute of the semblance of proof from Scripture. All the premises on which it is founded are taken for granted, without evidence. All that appears to have been done by these evangelists, is done every day by evangelists sent forth by the Presbyterian Church; and no reason can be assigned for ascribing to the missionaries to Ephesus and Crete any higher character than that the Episcopal cause demands it. In truth, when thrown into the form of a regular syllogism, its amount is neither more nor less than the following:—"None but diocesan bishops can ordain ministers and 'set in order' Churches; but Timothy and Titus discharged these offices: therefore, Timothy and Titus were diocesan bishops." But is not the very thing to be proved, —viz., that diocesan bishops alone can ordain, &c.— here taken for granted? Can there be a more gross begging of the whole question than this argument exemplifies?

It is hardly necessary to inform any intelligent reader of the Bible, that the postscripts, at the close of the Second Epistle to Timothy, and of the Epistle to Titus, and which speak of the former as "the first bishop of Ephesus," and the latter as "the first bishop of Crete," are of no authority. It is acknowledged by all learned men, that they make no part of the sacred text. They were, no doubt, interpolated by officious transcribers, more than four hundred years after the date of the epistles. They are not found at all in the most authentic copies of the original. They are not the same in the copies in which they are found. They were excluded from all the earliest

English translations. And for a long time after their introduction, they were printed in a different type from the received text, to indicate that they formed no part of the authentic Scriptures. But when our present translation of the Bible, in the reign of James I., was executed, as the translators were all Episcopalians, they, very improperly, suffered these postscripts to occupy the place in which we now find them, without any mark to distinguish them from the authorized text.

Such is the amount of the argument drawn from the alleged Episcopal character of Timothy and Titus. It finds no countenance whatever in the New Testament. Every fact which is stated in the inspired history concerning those pious evangelists is not only perfectly reconcilable with the Presbyterian doctrine, but agrees far better with it than with the Episcopalian hypothesis. Accordingly, the eminent Episcopal divine, Dr. Whitby, with all his zeal for Prelacy, speaks, in his Commentary, in the following language:—"The great controversy concerning this, and the Epistles to Timothy, is, whether Timothy and Titus were indeed made bishops—the one of Ephesus, and the Proconsular Asia; the other of Crete. Now, of this matter I confess *I can find nothing in any writer of the first three centuries, nor any intimation that they bore that name.*" And afterwards he adds, concerning the whole argument: "I confess that these two instances, absolutely taken, afford us no convincing arguments in favour of a settled diocesan Episcopacy, because there is nothing which proves they did, or were, to exercise these acts of government rather as bishops than evangelists." It is true, this learned writer, while he acknowledges that no evidence in favour of the Episcopal character of these missionaries is to be found within the first three centuries, expresses an opinion, that there is testimony enough to establish it in the writers of the fourth and fifth centuries. This, however, is not scriptural testimony; and what is not found in the Bible, is surely not binding on the Church. Besides, this testimony of the fourth and fifth centuries, when impartially examined, and compared with other con-

temporaneous testimony, will be found perfectly worthless, and, of course, unavailing to the cause in support of which it is adduced, because it is not consistent either with itself or with the New Testament.*

Another argument from Scripture, commonly urged by our Episcopal brethren, is derived from the "angels" addressed in the Epistles to the Seven Churches of the Lesser Asia. "In each of those Churches," say the advocates of Prelacy, "an individual is addressed under the title of 'Angel,' which is a very strong argument against ministerial parity, and in favour of Episcopacy." But this argument is just as powerless as any of the preceding, or rather, it is destitute even of their degree of plausibility. The term "angel" signifies messenger. As an ecclesiastical title, it is derived from the Old Testament. In every Jewish synagogue, or worshipping congregation, there was "an angel of the Church," whose duty it was to preside and take the lead in public worship. This title was evidently transferred from the Synagogue to the Christian Church. And if we suppose each of these "angels" to be the ordinary pastor of a single church or congregation, it will perfectly accord with every representation concerning them found in the epistles in question. But he who looks carefully into the addresses to the several Churches contained in these epistles, will find much reason to doubt whether individual ministers are at all designated by the title of "angel." Some have supposed that collective bodies of pastors were intended. Of this opinion a number of the most eminent Episcopal writers have been the advocates. There is absolutely not a shadow of proof that prelates, or anything like them, are referred to. Some of the most learned and zealous advocates of Prelacy have

* Episcopal writers are very much divided among themselves as to the case of Timothy and Titus. Some would make them out to be archbishops! It is plain that they were Commissioners appointed for a special object, which is not inconsistent with the principles or practice of the Presbyterian Church. *Vide* "Prynn's Unbishoping of Timothy and Titus;" and "Ayton's Original Constitution," 412–440. See also the testimonies of Episcopal writers in his Appendix, 22–28.—*L.*

acknowledged this; and the whole argument really amounts to nothing more than a mere gratuitous assumption of the point to be proved.*

One more argument may be briefly adverted to, which our Episcopal brethren sometimes urge in support of their cause. They say that the Apostle James was evidently bishop of Jerusalem. This they attempt to prove by telling us that he spoke last, and gave a very pointed sentence, or opinion, in the Synod of Jerusalem; that Peter, after his release from prison, said to certain persons, "Go, show these things unto James and to the brethren;" and that when Paul visited Jerusalem, it is said concerning him: "And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present." On these, and other occasions, the advocates of Episcopal claims tell us, James was spoken of as a distinguished man, and treated with marked respect; and from this circumstance it is inferred that he was the bishop of Jerusalem.

This argument, when stripped of all its decorations, stands thus: "James was the last speaker, and gave a decisive opinion in an ecclesiastical assembly; therefore, he was superior to all others present, and, of course, the bishop of Jerusalem! Peter requested an account of his release from prison to be sent to James; *therefore*, James was the bishop of Jerusalem! Paul and his company went to the house of James in Jerusalem, and there found the elders convened; *therefore*, James was the ecclesiastical governor of that city!" This is absolutely the whole of the scriptural argument drawn from the character of James! Surely, a more singular instance of the gratuitous assumption of what ought to be proved, was never exhibited.†

So utterly groundless, then, do we find the claim of our Episcopal brethren, when brought to the test of

* Dr. Stillingfleet, an able Episcopal writer, asks, "Why may not the word 'angel' be taken only by way of representatives of the body itself; or, what is far more probable, of the concessory, or order of presbyters in that Church." (*Irenicum*, p. 836.)—*L.*

† *Vide* a number of Episcopal testimonies, in Ayton's Appendix, against the supposed Prelacy of James.—*L.*

Scripture. Their claim, it will be observed, is positive and explicit. It is, that the New Testament holds forth, as existing in the apostolic Church, and intended to be perpetual, an order of men superior to ministers of the word and sacraments; that this order is alone empowered to ordain; and, of course, that without ordination by this order of men, there can be no ministry, no Church, no valid ordinances, no "covenanted mercy," to any of the children of men. In short, they would persuade us, not only that the New Testament bears them out in maintaining the actual existence of such an order in the apostolic Church, but also, that it warrants them in contending for it as absolutely and indispensably necessary. The burden of proof lies on them. They have not proved, and cannot prove, either. That the power of ordaining was not confined to the apostles while they lived, is manifest to all who read the Bible without prejudice. That the extraordinary powers of the apostles were to be transmitted to successors, can no more be proved from the Word of God, than that inspiration and miracles are still continued and transmitted from man to man in the Church. That Timothy and Titus were prelates, because they were appointed to "ordain elders," and "set in order the things that were wanting" in Ephesus and Crete, when it is utterly uncertain whether either of them performed a single ordination alone, is no more proved, or even probable, than that modern Presbyterian missionaries to frontier settlements are prelates, because they are commissioned to perform similar work. And so of all the other alleged sources of proof from Scripture. They are just as destitute of force, and just as delusive as the Popish doctrine—that the primacy of St. Peter, and the transmission of that primacy to the bishops of Rome, may be proved from the Word of God.

Some of the most learned advocates of Episcopacy, however, while they have freely confessed that their favourite system could not be established from Scripture, have confidently asserted, that it is abundantly and unquestionably supported by the testimony of the

Fathers. Into this field it is not judged proper here to enter, for the following reasons:—

1. The *Bible* contains the religion of Protestants. It is the only infallible, and the only sufficient rule of faith and practice. Even if Prelacy were found unequivocally represented as existing, by the Fathers, in fifty years after the last apostle, yet if it be not found in the Bible, as it assuredly is not, such testimony would by no means establish its apostolic appointment. It would only prove that the Church was very early corrupted. We know, indeed, that no such testimony exists; but if it did, as long as we have the Bible, we ought to reject it.

2. We know that human inventions, and various forms of corruption, did in fact very early obtain currency in the Christian Church; and that several practices, quite as likely to be opposed as the encroachments of Prelacy, were introduced and established within the first three hundred years.

3. This is a kind of testimony very difficult to be brought within a narrow compass. For, while some detached passages from the early Fathers have the appearance at first view of favouring Prelacy; yet, when carefully examined, and compared with other passages from the same Fathers, and others of equal credibility, their testimony will be found utterly unfavourable to Prelatical claims. He who reads what the learned Jerome, in the fourth century, declares concerning Prelacy, as having no foundation in divine appointment, and as gradually brought in by human ambition, will begin to see that the testimony of the Fathers on this subject is very different from what sanguine and ardent Prelatists are accustomed to represent it. So the testimony of Jerome was understood by Bishop Jewel, by Bishop Morton, by Archbishop Whitgift, by Bishop Bilston, by Bishop Stillingfleet, and by a number of other divines as learned and able as ever adorned the Church of England. And with respect to the testimony of Ignatius, early in the second century, who is commonly regarded and resorted to as the sheet-anchor of the Episcopal claim, one could

scarcely wish for a more distinct and graphic description of Presbyterianism than his epistles represent as existing in all the Churches which he addressed. Ignatius speaks expressly of a bishop, elders, and deacons existing in every worshipping assembly which he addressed. Is this the language of Prelacy? So far from it, nothing can be plainer than that this language can be reconciled with the Presbyterian system alone. Presbyterians are the only denomination who have, in every worshipping assembly, a bishop, presbyters or elders, and deacons.*

But it cannot be too often repeated, or too constantly kept in view, that whatever the Fathers may say on this subject, is not to decide respecting it. If Episcopacy, when brought to the test of Scripture, cannot stand, we may very willingly leave its support from other sources to those who may feel inclined to "receive for doctrines the commandments of men." This principle formed one of the great dividing lines between our fathers, the Puritans of England, and the prelates and others by whom the Reformed Church was organized in that land. The Puritans contended that the Bible was the only infallible rule of faith and practice; that it ought to be regarded as the standard of Church government and discipline, as well as of doctrine; and that the Church, as it stood in the days of the apostles, is the proper model for our imitation. But the bishops and the court clergy openly maintained that the Scriptures were not to be considered as the only standard of Church government and discipline; that the Fathers and the early councils were to be united with them as the rule; that the Saviour and his apostles left the whole matter of Church order to be accommodated to the discretion of the civil magistrate, and to the form of polity in the State; and that the form of Church government adopted in the third and fourth centuries, and especially in the civil establishment under Constantine, was really to be preferred to that which existed in the days of the apostles, which they considered as peculiarly fitted to the infant

* For a short view of the Testimony of the Fathers and Reformers, see Appendix.—*L.*

state of the Church, while depressed by persecution. And upon this plan it is notorious that the men who took the lead in reforming and organizing the Church of England avowedly proceeded.

But we can not only prove a negative—that is, we can not only establish that there is no evidence in favour diocesan Episcopacy to be found in Scripture—but we can go farther, and show that the testimony in favour of ministerial parity found in the New Testament is clear and strong. Nothing is plainer than that our blessed Lord severely rebuked, and explicitly condemned all contests among his ministering servants about rank and pre-eminence.* It is acknowledged, by the great mass of learned and pious men of all Protestant denominations, that it is plain, from the apostolical writings, that the ecclesiastical order of the Synagogue was transferred by inspired men to the Christian Church. It is evident, on the slightest inspection of the New Testament history, that the names and functions of the Church officers appointed by the apostles were derived, not from the Temple, but from the Synagogue. It is explicitly granted by our Episcopal brethren themselves, that in the New Testament, the titles bishop and presbyter were used interchangeably to designate the same office, and that the names were then common. Nothing is plainer than that the elders of the Church of Ephesus are spoken of as its bishops (Acts xx.), and, of course, that there were a plurality of bishops in the same Church, which is wholly inconsistent with the doctrine of Prelacy.† It is manifest that Timothy received his designation to the sacred office "by the laying on of the hands of the *presbytery*." We find that such men as

* Our Lord foresaw, and no doubt meant to discourage, the lordly pretensions which he knew would one day appear in his professed Church. His cautions were evidently meant to guard his followers in all ages against the spirit of Popery, and the course from which it, in a great measure, springs—unequal official rank in the ministry, whether in the Church of Rome or in professedly Protestant communions.—*L.*

† It is essential to Prelacy to have one bishop over many—it may be hundreds, or even thousands of Churches.—*L.*

Barnabas, and Simeon, and Lucius, and Manaen, none of whom, it is evident, were prelates, were commanded to lay their hands on Paul, and one of their own number, and "separate them" to a special ministry on which they were about to depart; "and when they had fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them and sent them away." But it is contrary to all order, human and divine, for an official inferior authoritatively to bless, and, by imposition of hands, to set forth an official superior; and, finally, it is evident, that the mere silence of Scripture, as to the claim of our Episcopal brethren, affords positive and conclusive proof that it cannot be well founded. The advocates of Prelacy, especially the more zealous and determined of their number, make their claim a fundamental one. According to them, as before said, there can be no covenanted Church, no valid ministry or sacraments, without ordination to the sacred office by prelates. Now, can it be believed, that a matter so important, nay, vital, should not be laid down in Scripture, in explicit terms, and with incontrovertible evidence? Surely, if the claim were well founded, whatever else was left in doubt, the prerogative of the bishop might be expected to be set forth with reiterated and unquestionable evidence. But our Episcopal brethren themselves acknowledge that this is not the case. Their scriptural testimony is, in no one instance, direct and explicit; but all *indirect, and remotely inferential.* They do not pretend to quote a single passage of Scripture which declares, in so many words, or anything like it, in favour of their claim; but their whole reliance, in regard to scriptural testimony, is placed on facts, and deductions from those facts, which many of the most learned of their own denomination pronounce utterly unavailing for their purpose. Now, can any rational man believe that our blessed Lord and his apostles could possibly have regarded the doctrine of Prelacy in the same light, and laid equal stress upon it with our Episcopal brethren, and yet have left the whole subject, to say the least, in so inexplicit and dubious a

posture? He who can believe this is prepared to believe anything that his prejudices may dictate.

In conformity with the foregoing statements, it is well known that, at the era of the Reformation, the leaders of the Church of England *stood alone* in reforming their Church upon Prelatical principles.* Luther, Melancthon, Zuingle, Bucer, and Peter Martyr, as well as Calvin and Knox, as stated in a preceding chapter—all, all, scattered through every part of Europe, without concert, interpreted the New Testament as plainly teaching the doctrine of ministerial parity, and regarded every kind of imparity in the gospel ministry as the result of human contrivance, and not of divine appointment. In

* Perhaps some readers, who are aware that the Lutheran Church in Germany *now* has superintendents, and that the Churches of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, have bishops, may think that the text needs qualification. But I believe Dr. Miller is quite accurate. It is well known that Luther held the scriptural authority of parity of ministers; that he acted upon the principle, though himself simply a presbyter, joining in the ordination of men to the office of the ministry down to within a few days of his death; and that in this his sentiments and practice were at one with those of the other illustrious German Reformers. At the same time, he thought it not unlawful, as a matter of mere human and political expediency, sometimes to have superintendents. Hence the existence of the office in the Lutheran Church, which seems to be much the same as the office bearing the same name in the early history of the Church of Scotland. So far as I can learn, the superintendents in the German Lutheran Church at the present day have no inherent superiority over other pastors; the office, too, is not for life—but temporary according to the need of the Church. As in Presbyterian Churches, the Lutheran holds the office of the ruling elder to be scriptural and divine.

With regard to the Northern Churches of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, though they have *now* bishops and archbishops, and a full organization of Episcopal government, yet it is important to remember that those who planted the Reformation, and ordained the first Protestant ministers, were not prelates, but *presbyters;* that those who wear the names of bishops and archbishops, themselves received the ordination of presbyters, and so can transmit only Presbyterian ordination; and that all the Swedish divines, even the highest, hold Prelacy not to be of divine right, but a mere *human regulation.* They, as well as the Danes, have all along maintained the divine parity of ministers, though their bishops retain the office for life. The Rev. Dr. Collier of Philadelphia, a learned Swedish pastor, certifies these facts in reference to his country. See "Letters of Dr. Miller," p. 336. It is well known that Bugenhagius, who ordained the first superintendents in Denmark, was merely a presbyter. *Vide* "Biographia Evangelica," under his name.—*L.*

short, in every part of Protestant Christendom, out of England—however the leaders of the Reformation differed, and differed sometimes with ardour on other subjects—here they, with scarcely a single exception, were all agreed, that in the apostles' days bishop and presbyter were the same, in fact as well as in name; and that, even when it was thought proper to allow to any minister a degree of pre-eminence, it was to be defended on the ground of human prudence alone. How shall we account for this fact, but by supposing that the plain and obvious construction of the Word of God, on this subject, is favourable to Presbyterian parity, and unfriendly to Prelatical claims?

But while our Episcopal brethren depart from the primitive and apostolic model in regard to bishops, so they equally depart from that model in respect to the deacon's office. They contend that deacons are one of the orders of clergy, and are authorized, by divine appointment, to preach and baptize. Let any one impartially read the first six verses of the 6th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and then say whether there is the smallest warrant for this opinion. The apostles say to the people, "It is not meet that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables. Wherefore look ye out among you seven men of honest report, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word." Can it be supposed, in direct opposition to this whole statement, that these very deacons were appointed, after all, not to take care of the poor, but to labour in "the ministry of the Word?" This were an inconsistency, nay, an absurdity so glaring, that the only wonder is, how any one can possibly adopt it after reading the inspired statement. The circumstance of Philip, some time after his appointment as deacon, being found preaching and baptizing in Samaria and other places, does not afford the smallest presumptive evidence against this conclusion. Are not cases frequently occurring in the Presbyterian Church in which young men, after serving a year or two as ruling elders or deacons, are set apart

as ministers of the gospel? Soon after Philip's appointment to the deaconship in Jerusalem, the members of the Church in that city were chiefly "scattered abroad by persecution." He was, of course, driven from his residence. Now, the probability is, that about this time—seeing he was "a man full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom," and, therefore, eminently qualified to be useful in preaching the gospel—he received a new ordination as an evangelist, and in this character went forth to preach and baptize. He is expressly called an "evangelist" by the same inspired writer who gives us the account just recited of his appointment as deacon. (Acts xxi. 8.) Until it can be proved, then, that he preached and baptized as a deacon, and not as an evangelist, the supposition is utterly improbable, and wholly unworthy of credit.

The truth is, the primitive and apostolical office of deacon, was to take care of the poor and "serve tables." By little and little, several centuries after the apostolic age, the occupants of this office usurped the functions of a higher one; which usurpation was afterwards confirmed by ecclesiastical custom. So a number of the most respectable of the early Fathers clearly understood the matter. Thus Origen, in his Commentary on the 21st chapter of Matthew, speaking of the corruption which prevailed among the deacons in his day, represents them, not as neglecting to preach or baptize, but as "neglecting the poor, and converting to their own use the Church's charitable funds." Again, the same father tells us (*Tract* 16, *in Matt.*), "the deacons preside over the money-tables of the Church." And again, "The deacons were appointed to preside over the tables of the Church, as we are taught in the Acts of the Apostles." Ambrose, in the fourth century, in his Commentary on Ephesians, expressly declares that, in his day, "the deacons ordinarily were not authorized to preach." Chrysostom, in the same century, in his Commentry on Acts vi., *Homil.* 14, tells us, that in his time "there were no such deacons in the Church as the apostles ordained;" and, in the same connection,

gives it as his opinion, that it ought to have been then as it was in the apostles' days. Jerome, in his famous letter to Evagrius, expressly calls the deacon "a minister of tables and widows." The "Apostolical Constitutions," commonly referred to the fourth or fifth century, contain (book ii., ch. 27) the following passage:—"Let the deacon give nothing to any poor man without the bishop's knowledge and consent." And in the sixth general Council of Constantinople, *Can.* 16, it is declared, that the scriptural deacons were no other than overseers of the poor, and that such was the opinion of the ancient Fathers."*

But parity among her ministers is not the only feature which distinguishes the government of the Presbyterian Church. Her mode of conducting discipline in each Church by a bench of elders acting as the representative of the members at large; and by courts of review and control, admitting of appeals, where parties feel aggrieved, and binding all the particular Churches together as one body walking by the same rules of truth and order, and subject to the same uniform constitutional authority, are among her peculiar privileges. In regard to both these points, Presbyterians differ from Independents and Congregationalists, as well as from Episcopalians, and, indeed, from most other denominations of Christians. To these our attention will next be directed.

Independents and Congregationalists commit the whole government and discipline of their Churches immediately to the body of the communicants. In some of their Churches all the communicants, male and female, have

* Before tamely submitting to be *unchurched* by what, after all, is only a handful of Protestant Christendom, Presbyterians, constituting the vast majority, may well start the inquiry, Whether that Church can be a Church of Christ, which creates the office of prelate without divine appointment—which mangles the office of presbyter—perverts the office of deacon to a purpose never contemplated in Scripture, and which altogether extinguishes the divine office of ruling elder? It may well admit of question, Whether such a Church be apostolic and primitive? At least, when there is so much evidently necessary to make out their own Christian title, the new Anglican school may pause a little in their summary unchurching of their neighbours.—*L.*

an equal vote; in others, the males only take a part in discipline. In the estimation of Presbyterians, this mode of conducting ecclesiastical discipline is liable to most serious objections. They consider it as wholly unsupported by Scripture; as "setting those to judge, in many cases, who are least esteemed in the Church;" as extremely unfavourable to the calm and wise administration of justice; nay, as, of all the forms of ecclesiastical discipline, most exposed to the sway of ignorance, prejudice, passion, and artful intrigue; that, under the guise of liberty, it often leads to the most grievous tyranny; and is adapted to exert an injurious influence on the characters both of the pastor and the people

In the Presbyterian Church, the government and discipline in each congregation is committed to a bench of elders, consisting of eight or ten of the most pious, enlightened, wise, prudent, and grave members of the Church. They constitute, with the pastor at their head, a judicial body, who maintain an official inspection over the members of the Church, and deliberately sit in judgment on all those delicate and yet momentous cases, which are connected with receiving, admonishing, rebuking, suspending, excommunicating, and dismissing the members of the flock committed to their care. Our reasons for conducting in this manner the government and discipline of the Church, are the following:—

1. It is certain, that in the system of the Jewish Synagogue, according to the model of which the Christian Church was undoubtedly organized, the whole government and discipline was conducted by a bench of elders, and not by the body of the people.

2. It is manifest that government and discipline were so conducted in the apostolic Church. We read that, in every Church under the direction of the apostles, a plurality of elders were ordained; and we find a class of elders distinctly spoken of, who "ruled well," but did not "labour in the word and doctrine." (1 Tim. v. 17.)

3. We find this class of elders, as bearing rule in each Church, very distinctly and frequently alluded to in several of the earliest Christian Fathers, and by none

more clearly than by Ignatius, the pious pastor of Antioch.*

4. The pious witnesses of the truth, who kept alive the true doctrine and order of the Church during the dark ages, more especially the Waldenses and the Bohemian brethren, uniformly governed their Churches by means of ruling as well as teaching elders, as we have before seen.

5. All the leading Reformers on the continent of Europe, with scarcely an exception, though separated from each other by different names and strong prejudices, agreed, without concert, in teaching the divine authority of ruling elders, and, in proof of it, referred to the same Scriptures which we are accustomed to cite for establishing the same thing. The Reformers in England stood alone in excluding this class of officers from their Church; and even some of their number—among the rest Archbishop Whitgift, as we have seen—acknowledged that there were such officers in the primitive Church; but that, in the then existing circumstances, it was not necessary or expedient to retain them.

6. Such officers are indispensably necessary to the maintenance of sound and edifying discipline. Without them, discipline will either be wholly neglected, or carried on with popular noise and confusion, or conducted by the pastor himself—thus often placing him in circumstances adapted to make him either a tyrant, partial to favourites, or a political temporizer. This has appeared so manifest to many Independent Congregational Churches, that they have appointed each a committee, consisting of six or eight of their most pious, enlightened, and grave members, on whom was devolved the whole business of preparing, arranging, and manag-

* This is explicitly acknowledged by a number of learned Episcopalians. Among the rest Archbishop Whitgift expresses himself thus:—"I know that, in the primitive Church, they had in every Church certain seniors, to whom the government of the congregation was committed; but that was before there was any Christian prince or magistrate that openly professed the gospel, and before there was any Church by public authority established." (*Defence against Cartwright*, pp. 638, 651.)—*M.*

ing every case of discipline, so that the body of the communicants might have nothing more to do than to give their public sanction, by a vote, to what had been virtually done already by this judicious committee. Could there be a more emphatic acknowledgment of the importance and necessity of this class of officers?*

Finally, Independents and Congregationalists consider each particular Church as entirely independent of every other Church. They suppose that the authority exercised by the communicants of each Church is supreme and final; and that no courts of review and control, formed by the representatives of a number of co-ordinate Churches, and invested with judicial power over the whole, ought to be admitted. Hence, when any member of an Independent, or of a strictly Congregational Church, is considered by himself, or by his friends, as unjustly cast out, or is in any way injuriously treated, he has no remedy. The system of Independency furnishes no tribunal to which he can appeal. He must sit down, while he lives, under the oppressive sentence, unless the body originally pronouncing it should choose to remove it. The same essential defect in this system also appears in a variety of other cases. If a controversy arise between a pastor and his flock, acting on strict Congregational principles; or if a contest occur between two Independent or Congregational Churches in the vicinity of each other, their ecclesiastical constitution furnishes no means of relief. The controversy may be subjected to the decision of a civil court, or to the judgment of selected arbitrators, just as may be done when controversies occur among secular men. But their system of Church order affords no remedy. Recourse must be had for relief to those worldly instrumentalities, which are equally painful to the pious heart, and dishonourable to the cause of Christ.

But for all these difficulties, Presbyterianism, in her essential constitution, furnishes appropriate, prompt, and

* For farther and fuller views on the office of ruling elder, as also the subsequent point of Courts of Review, *vide* my little work on the "Eldership of the Church of Scotland," &c., 1841, pp. 93-98.—*L.*

for the most part, adequate relief. Her system of government and discipline contains within its own bosom the means of adjustment and of peace. Every species of controversy is committed for settlement to a grave and enlightened judicial body, made up of the representatives of all the Churches in a given district—a body, not the creature of a day, which, when its work is done, ceases to exist; but organized, permanent, and responsible; whose decisions are not merely advisory, but authoritative; and from whose sentences, if they be considered as erroneous, an appeal may be taken to a higher tribunal, embracing a larger portion of the Church, and far removed from the excitement of the original contest.

We find the principle on which these courts of review and control are founded strikingly exemplified in the New Testament history, and our practice abundantly warranted by New Testament facts. When a question arose at Antioch respecting the obligation of Jewish observances, the Church in that place did not attempt, as a body of Independents would, of course, have done, to decide the matter for themselves, leaving the other Churches to do as they pleased; but they felt that, as it was a question which concerned the whole Christian body, so a general and authoritative decision of the question, binding on the whole body, ought to be made. They, therefore, empowered special delegates to carry up the question to "the apostles and elders at Jerusalem," to be by them conclusively settled. There, accordingly, it was debated and decided upon in full synod; and that decision, in the form of "decrees" (δογματα), that is, authoritative adjudications, sent down to all the Churches to be registered and obeyed. Can any one conceive of a more perfect example of a Presbyterian synod, convened as a judicial body, and pronouncing a decision, not as a mere advisory council, but as a judicatory of Christ, invested with judicial power to declare the path of duty in a given case, not for a single congregation merely, but for the whole visible Church?

There is no doubt, indeed, that this system of authoritative decision, not for one congregation only, but for a

number of Churches belonging to the same visible body, may be weakly or wickedly managed. Like every thing in the hands of man, and even like the gospel itself, it may be unskilfully administered, and sometimes even perverted into means of oppression and mischief. So may the most perfect system in the world, civil and ecclesiastical. So may Independency and Congregationalism. For, as an eminent Independent (the Rev. Robert Hall) remarked, in speaking on this very subject, "While power is dangerous in the hands of a few, wisdom is seldom with the multitude." The fault, however, is not in the system, but in the administration. Here is a form of ecclesiastical polity, complete in all its parts—fitted to obviate every difficulty; not, indeed, armed with civil power—not permitted to enforce its decisions by civil penalties (in which every friend of genuine Christianity must rejoice); a polity to which folly, caprice, or rebellion, may refuse to bow; but, so far as happy adjustment and moral power can go, better adapted to promote the union, and the harmonious counsel and co-operation of all the Churches which are willing to avail themselves of its advantages, assuredly, than any other that Christendom presents.

Such is a cursory view of the argument in favour of Presbyterian Church government, and of the peculiar advantages attending that form of ecclesiastical order. It is better adapted than any other to repress clerical ambition; to prevent clerical encroachments and tyranny; to guard against the reign of popular effervescence and violence; to secure the calm, enlightened, and edifying exercise of discipline; to maintain the religious rights of the people against all sinister influence; and to afford relief in all cases in which a single Church, or an inferior judicatory, may have passed an improper sentence, from either mistake, prejudice, or passion. It establishes, in all our ecclesiastical borders, that strict, *representative* system of government, which has been "ever found to lie at the foundation of all practical freedom, both political and religious;" and which, under God, affords the best pledge of justice and stability in the administration.

It affords that inspection over the lives and conversation of Church members, which is ever indispensably needed, and which is at once vigilant, parental, and judicious; and when faithfully carried into execution, is better fitted than any other to bring the whole Church to act together, and to unite all hearts and hands in Christian beneficence.* And, finally, it is better fitted than any other to maintain a wise, impartial, and faithful inspection over the lives and ministrations of the body of the clergy. How much better is a venerable presbytery adapted to discharge this duty to edification, than a single bishop, who, to say nothing of other faults, may indulge in the grossest favouritism or tyranny, without the possibility of adequate control! This form of Church government cannot, indeed, of itself, infuse life and activity into an ecclesiastical body; but where vitality, and zeal, and resources exist, there is, undoubtedly, no form of ecclesiastical organization so well adapted to bind together a body consisting of many parts, to unite councils, to invigorate efforts, and to cause a large and extended mass of professing Christians to walk by the same rules, to mind the same things, to speak the same language, and to feel that they are in fact, as well as in name, one body in Christ, and every "one members one of another."

Our Methodist brethren refuse to admit any representation from the laymen of their Churches into their Conferences, to which the exercise of ecclesiastical authority is committed; and by this refusal, as well as on account of some other things of a similar nature, they have occasioned a serious schism in their body. Our Episcopal brethren, yielding to what appeared to them the necessity and importance of introducing a lay representation into their ecclesiastical assemblies, have "lay deputies" in the lower house of all their "Conventions."† For this feature, however, in their organization in this country, they do not pretend to offer any divine warrant.

* See "Presbyterianism Favourable to Peace and Union," in Part II.—*L.*

† The Episcopalians to whom Dr. Miller refers, are American Episcopalians.—*L.*

It is well known that there is no such feature in the Church from which they derive their origin; and it is without the shadow of support from any other principle in their system than that which grows out of the supposed right of the Church to institute, at her pleasure, both rites and offices which the Master never sanctioned. On the contrary, for every part of her system, the Presbyterian Church claims a scriptural warrant. She maintains that no Church is at liberty to appoint officers, or to exercise authority which cannot be found in Scripture. She vests ruling elders with the function of overseeing and governing in the Church, not because they are convenient and useful, or even necessary, but because she finds ample evidence of their institution in the apostolic Church. She commits to appropriate judicial assemblies the authoritative regulation of all her affairs, under the laws of Christ, not merely because she sees many human advantages resulting from this system, but also, and chiefly, because she finds in the scriptural principles of the essential unity of the visible Church, and in the decisive example of the synod of Jerusalem, the fullest inspired warrant for this plan of ecclesiastical polity. Let Presbyterians rejoice that even those denominations which reject, in theory, her scriptural representative system, are compelled, after all, to resort to it in fact, and cannot without it preserve either unity or order.*

* It is a high testimony to Presbytery, that intelligent Christian men and Christian Churches are gradually forced, by the experienced defects of every other ecclesiastical system, to Presbyterian ground. It is generally understood that the Methodist Church feels the need of some such office as the ruling elder being introduced to its Conference. In the United States of America, the Episcopal Church has been greatly pared down in its Church government, as well as decidedly improved in its liturgy; in short, has been made to approach nearer to Presbytery. The German Lutherans, too, who settle there, soon give up their superintendents, as well as rise in their theological purity. It is well known, too, that when a Church becomes missionary, either at home or abroad, it is obliged to set up associations for the accomplishment of its purposes—associations which substantially, and in that respect, make it Presbyterian.—*L.*

CHAPTER V.

THE WORSHIP OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

A FUNDAMENTAL principle of the Presbyterian Church, in forming her "Directory for the Worship of God," is, that here, as in everything else, Holy Scripture is the only safe guide. One of the earliest practical errors which gained ground in the Christian community was, the adoption of the principle that the ministers of religion might lawfully add, at their pleasure, to the rites and ceremonies of the Church. In consequence of the admission of this error, Augustine complained, as early as the beginning of the fifth century, that for one appointment of God's, ten of man's had crept into the Church, and formed a burden greater, in some respects, than was the ceremonial economy of the Jews. The fact is, for the sake of drawing both Jews and Pagans into the Church, many rites and ceremonies were adopted from both, that they might feel more at home in the Christian assemblies. This evil increased, until, before the Reformation, it had reached that revolting amount of superstition which now distinguishes the Church of Rome.

It was in reference to this point that our fathers, both in Scotland and England, had many conflicts, when their respective Churches in those countries were organized and settled in the sixteenth century. On the one hand, the prelates, and other court clergy, were in favour of a splendid ritual, and were disposed to retain a large number of the ceremonies which had been so long in use in the Church of Rome. On the other, the Puritans in

England, and the corresponding body in Scotland, contended that the Scriptures being the only infallible rule of faith and practice, no rite or ceremony ought to have a place in the public worship of God, which is not warranted in Scripture, either by direct precept or example, or by good and sufficient inference. In Scotland the advocates of primitive simplicity prevailed, and established in their national Church the same mode of worship which we believe existed in the apostolic age, and which now obtains in the Presbyterian Church in that country and in the United States. In England, our fathers, the Puritans, were not so happy as to succeed in establishing the same scriptural system. Under the influence of the monarch and the court clergy, they were outvoted. Still it is undoubtedly certain, that a large portion of the most pious and devoted of the clergy of the Church of England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and some of her most worthy dignitaries, when the character of that Church, under its reformed regimen, was finally fixed, did importunately plead for laying aside in public worship every thing to which Presbyterians at the present day object, as having no warrant in Scripture.* And

* Taken as a whole, no body of religious men were, perhaps, possessed of a higher or more estimable character than the Puritans of England. They are not to be confounded with the Sectaries who appeared at the beginning of the Commonwealth. The Puritans were Presbyterian; the Sectaries Independent. The Puritans were the descendants of the faithful founders of the Church of England, who were anxious to carry the Reformation farther than unhappy political expediency would allow, and sometimes formed almost one-half the English Church. The other party were comparatively modern, and by no means of so honourable an ancestry. Had the wishes of the Puritans at an early day been realized, England, humanly speaking, would have been brought into such moral order, that there would have been no scope in prevailing ignorance for the growth of the Sectaries—parties, from a supposed connection with whom the Presbyterian Puritans have ever suffered in public estimation. The ecclesiastical, and so the civil liberties of England, have been much indebted to the sound religious principles which the Puritans diffused—the strong exercise of private judgment to which they called—the sacrifices which they cheerfully endured for conscience—the fortitude with which they bore their sufferings.* They contribute! largely, also, to lay the foundations of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and to stamp a Protestant and Evangelical character upon a nation which seems destined, in the provi-

although they failed of securing their object in the National Church, yet the descendants of the Puritans, both in that country and our own, have been permitted to realize their wishes as to most of the particulars on which they then insisted. On some of the principal of these particulars it is proposed now to dwell, and to assign, with regard to each, our reasons for adhering to them in our system of worship.

But before we proceed to this detail, it may be useful to offer a general remark or two, which will serve to show why we object to all human inventions and additions in the worship of God.

1. Christ is the only King and Head of the Church. His Word is the law of his house. Of course, the Church ought not to consider herself as possessing any power which that Word does not warrant. If, therefore, she cannot find in Scripture authority, either direct or fairly implied, to the amount contended for, she does not possess that authority.

2. We think that such inventions and additions are expressly forbidden in Scripture. The significant question asked by God of his ancient people, when speaking on this very subject (Isa. i. 12), "Who hath required this of your hands?" seems to be decisive. "Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," is spoken of (Matt. xv. 9) by our blessed Saviour as highly offensive to him. It would seem tacitly to imply that we are wiser than God, and understand the interest of the Church better than her Head and Lord.

3. If we once open this door, how or when shall it be closed? The Church, we are told, has power to decree rites and ceremonies; that is, a majority of the ruling powers of the Church have power at any time, as caprice, or a love of show, or superstition, or any other motive, may prompt, to add rite after rite, and ceremony

dence of God, to be an active co-operator with Great Britain in the evangelization of the world. The great thing which is awanting in regard to them is, an intelligent and impartial historian, who shall be a thorough Presbyterian, and record their eventful and instructive history in a suitable spirit.—*L.*

after ceremony, at pleasure, to the worship of God. Now, if this power be really inherent in the Church, what limit shall be put to its exercise? If she have power to add ten or twenty new ordinances to her ritual, has she not equal power to add a hundred, or five hundred, if a majority of her ministers should feel inclined to do so? And was it not precisely in this way, and upon this very principle, that the enormous mass of superstition which characterizes the Papacy, gradually accumulated? Surely a power which carries with it no limit but human caprice, and which has been so manifestly and shockingly abused in past ages, ought by no means to be claimed or exercised in the Church of God. But to be more particular.

SECTION I.—PRESBYTERIANS REJECT PRESCRIBED LITURGIES.

We do not, indeed consider the use of forms of prayer as in all cases unlawful. We do not doubt that they have been often useful, and that to many this mode of conducting public devotions is highly edifying. If any minister of our Church should think proper to compose a form of prayer, or a variety of forms, for his own use, or to borrow those which have been prepared by others, he ought to be considered as at perfect liberty so to do. But we object to being *confined* to forms of prayer. We contend that it is of great importance to the edification of the Church, that every minister be left at liberty to conduct the devotions of the sanctuary as his circumstances and the dispensations of Providence may demand.*

* The question is often argued as if it lay between a form of prayer and effusions altogether unpremeditated; but the *real* question lies between being stinted and bound to one uniform series of words by authority—repeated, it may be, several times every Sabbath-day to weariness, without daring to depart from them, and such freedom to the individual minister, that he may meditate or write beforehand as he judges best. It is plain that, under the last mode, the minister may avail himself of all the advantages, if there are such, of previous written preparation; while he is free from the serious disadvantages which are inseparable from being "stinted" from week to week to the same invariable set of words. The Presbyterian Directory of Public Worship recommends previous preparation.—*L.*

Our reasons for adopting this judgment, and a correspon ding practice, are the following:—

1. We think it perfectly evident that no forms of prayer, no prescribed liturgies, were used in the apostolic age of the Church. We read of none; nor do we find the smallest hint that any thing of the kind was then employed in either public or social worship. Will the most zealous advocates of liturgies point out even a probable example of the use of one in the New Testament? Can any one believe that Paul used a prescribed form of prayer when he took leave of the elders of Ephesus, after giving them a solemn charge? (Acts xx. 37.) Can it be imagined that he used a liturgy, when, in bidding farewell to a circle of friends in the city of Tyre who had treated him with kindness, he kneeled down on the seashore and prayed with them? Or can we suppose that he and Silas read from a book, when, at midnight, in the prison of Philippi, they prayed and sang praises unto God? Again, when Paul exhorted Timothy to see that "kings and all in authority" were remembered in public prayer, is it not evident that the Church had no liturgy? If she had been furnished with one, and confined to it, such direction would have been unnecessary, or rather absurd; for they would have had their prayers all prepared to their hand. In short, when we find prayer spoken of in the New Testament on a great variety of occasions, and in a great variety of language, is it not passing strange, if liturgies were then used, that no turn of expression giving the remotest hint of it should be employed? Surely, if forms of prayer had been regarded in the days of the apostles, as not only obligatory, but so highly important as some Protestants now profess to regard them, who can believe that the inspired writers would have passed over them in entire silence? The very least that we can infer from this circumstance is, that the use of them is not binding on the Church. The primitive Christians had, indeed, precomposed psalms and hymns, which they united in singing, and probably a uniform method, derived from the example and letters of the first ministers, of administering the sacraments and blessing

the people; but so have Presbyterians, and various other ecclesiastical bodies, who yet are not considered as using a liturgy. These, of course, have no application to the present inquiry.

2. The Lord's Prayer, given at the request of the disciples, forms no objection to this conclusion. It was evidently not intended to be used as an exact, and far less as an exclusive form. It is not given in the same words by any two of the evangelists. As it was given before the New Testament Church was set up, so it is strictly adapted to the old rather than the new ceremony. It contains no clause, asking for blessings in the name of Christ, which the Saviour himself afterwards solemnly enjoined as indispensable. After the resurrection and ascension of Christ, when the New Testament Church was set up, we read nothing more in the inspired history concerning the use of this form; and it is not until several centuries after the apostolic age, that we find this prayer statedly introduced into public worship. Accordingly, it is remarkable that Augustine, in the fourth century, expresses the decisive opinion, "that Christ intended this prayer as a model, rather than a form; that he did not mean to teach his disciples what words they should use in prayer, but what things they should pray for."

3. No such thing as a prescribed form of prayer appears to have been known in the Christian Church, for several hundred years after Christ. The contrary is, indeed, often asserted by the friends of liturgies, but wholly without evidence; nay, against the most conclusive evidence. The most respectable early writers who undertake to give an account of the worship of the early Christians, make use of language which is utterly irreconcilable with the practice of reading prayers. They tell us that the minister, or person who led in prayer, "poured out prayers according to his ability;" that he prayed, "closing his bodily eyes, and lifting up the eyes of his mind, and stretching forth his hands toward heaven." Surely, in this posture, it was impossible to "read prayers." Socrates and Sozomen, respectable ecclesiastical histori-

ans, who wrote in the fifth century, both concur in declaring that, in their day, "no two persons were found to use the same words in public worship." And Augustine, who was nearly their contemporary, declares, in relation to this subject, "There is freedom to use different words, provided the same things are mentioned in prayer." Basil, in the fourth century, giving directions about prayer, remarks, that there were two parts of this service; first, thanksgiving and praise, with self-abasement; and, secondly, petition. He advises to begin with the former, and, in doing it, to make choice of the language of Scripture. After giving an example of his meaning, he adds, "When thou hast praised Him out of the Scriptures, as thou art able (a strange clause, truly, if all had been prepared beforehand, and read out of a book), then proceed to petition." (*Clarkson on Liturgies*, p. 120.) Would not all this be manifestly absurd, if public prayer had been by a prescribed liturgy in Basil's days? The truth is, it is evident that extemporary or free prayer was generally used in the primitive Church, and continued to be used until orthodoxy and piety declined, and the grace as well as the gift of prayer greatly diminished. Then ministers began to seek the best aid that they could procure. The Church, however, at large, even then, provided no liturgies; but each pastor, who felt unable to pray extemporaneously, procured prayers composed by other individuals, which he used in public. Accordingly, Augustine tells us, that some ministers in his day (a period in which we have complete evidence that many of the sacred order were so uneducated as to be unable to write their own names) "lighted upon prayers which were composed not only by ignorant babblers, but also by heretics; and through the simplicity of their ignorance, having no proper discernment, they made use of them, supposing them to be good." Surely this could never have happened, if the Church had been accustomed at that time to the use of prescribed liturgies. In short, the very first document in the form of a prayer-book of which we read, is a *Libellus Officialis*, mentioned in the proceedings of the Council of Toledo, in the year 633

after Christ; and that was, evidently, rather a "Directory for the Worship of God," than a complete liturgy. There is, indeed, evidence that, before this time, ministers, deficient in talents and piety, either wrote prayers for themselves, or procured them from others, as before stated; but the first hint to be found of an ecclesiastical body interposing to regulate the business of public prayer appears about the middle of the fifth century.

With respect to the boasted liturgies of St. Mark, St. James, &c., of which we often hear, all enlightened Protestants, it is believed, agree that they are manifestly forgeries; and as to the liturgies attributed to Chrysostom, Basil, and several others of the early Christian Fathers, Bishop White, an English prelate, who lived in the seventeenth century, delivered the following opinion: —"The liturgies," says he, "fathered upon St. Basil, and St. Chrysostom, have a known mother (to wit, the Church of Rome); but there is (besides many other just exceptions) so great a dissimilitude between the supposed fathers of the children, that they rather argue the dishonest dealing of their mother, than serve as lawful witnesses of that which the adversary intended to prove by them." (*Tracts against Fisher, the Jesuit*, p. 377.)

4. If the apostles, or any apostolic men, had prepared and given to the Church any thing like a liturgy, we should, doubtless, have had it preserved, and transmitted with care to posterity. The Church, in this case, would have had one uniform book of prayers, which would have been in use, and held precious throughout the whole Christian community. But nothing of this kind has ever been pretended to exist. For, let it be remembered that the prayers in the Romish and English liturgies, ascribed to some of the early Fathers of the Church, and even to apostolical men, supposing them to be genuine, which by good judges, as we have just seen, is more than doubted, were not liturgies, but short prayers, or "collects,"— just such as thousands of Presbyterian ministers, who never thought of using a liturgy, have composed in their moments of devout retirement, and left among their private papers. Who doubts that devotional composition

is made by multitudes who reject the use of prescribed forms of prayer in public worship? Accordingly, when liturgies were gradually introduced into general use, in the sixth and subsequent centuries, on account of the decline of piety and learning among the clergy, there was no uniformity even among the Churches of the same state or kingdom. Every bishop, in his own diocese, appointed what prayers he pleased, and even indulged his taste for variety. Accordingly, it is a notorious fact, which confirms this statement, that when the Reformation commenced in England, the established Romish Church in that country had no single uniform liturgy for the whole kingdom; but there seems to have been a different one for the diocese of every bishop. And when, in the second year of King Edward's reign, the principal ecclesiastical dignitaries of the kingdom were directed to digest and report one uniform plan for the public service of the whole Church, they collated and compared the five Romish missals of the several dioceses of Sarum, York, Hereford, Bangor, and Lincoln, and out of these formed a liturgy for the Protestant Episcopal Church of England. So that the prayer-books which had been used in five Popish bishoprics, constituted the basis of the first liturgy of King Edward, and consequently of the Book of Common Prayer, as now used in Great Britain and the United States. This liturgy, at first, contained a number of things so grossly Popish, that, when it was read by Calvin and others, on the continent of Europe, to whom copies were sent for obtaining their opinion, their severe criticisms led to another review, and a considerable purgation. Still a number of articles were left acknowledged on all hands to have been adopted from the missals of the Church of Rome, which, as stated in various parts of this chapter, exceedingly grieved the more pious and evangelical part of the Church; but which the queen, and the ecclesiastics more immediately around her person, refused to exclude. Their antiquity was pled as an argument in their favour.

5. Confining ministers to forms of prayer in public worship, tends to restrain and discourage the spirit of

prayer. We cannot help thinking that the constant repetition of the same words, from year to year, tends to produce, at least with very many persons, dulness and a loss of interest. We are sure it is so with not a few. Bishop Wilkins, though a friend to the use of forms of prayer, when needed, argues strongly against binding ourselves entirely to such "leading strings," as he emphatically calls them, and expresses the opinion, that giving vent to the desires and affections of the heart in extemporary prayer, is highly favourable to growth in grace. (*Gift of Prayer*, ch. ii. pp. 10, 11.) Accordingly, it is remarkable that, when those who were once distinguished for praying extemporaneously with fluency and unction, lay aside this habit, and confine themselves to stinted forms for many years, they are apt to manifest a striking decline in the spirit of devotion, and are no longer able to engage in free prayer without much hesitation and embarrassment.

6. No form of prayer, however ample or diversified, can be accommodated to all the circumstances, exigencies, and wants of either individual Christians or of the Church in general. Now, when cases occur which are not provided for in the prescribed forms, what is to be done? Either extemporary prayer must be ventured upon, or the cases in question cannot be carried before the throne of grace in words at all. Is this alternative desirable? Cases of this kind have occurred, approaching the ludicrous, in which ministers have declined engaging in social prayer in situations of the deepest interest, because they could find nothing in their prayer-book adapted to the occasion! Nay, so common and so interesting a service as the monthly concert in prayer, on the first Monday evening of every month, can never be attended upon by an Episcopal pastor, in an appropriate and seasonable manner, without indulging in extemporary prayer. This has been, more than once, confessed and lamented by ministers of that denomination. *

* There is another serious disadvantage, and that is, that the form of prayer may be too late to be of service to the end for which it is designed. Suppose sudden illness in the royal family, all

7. It is no small argument against confining ministers and people to a prescribed form, that whenever religion is in a lively state in the heart of a minister accustomed to use a liturgy, and especially when it is powerfully revived among the members of his Church, his form of prayer will seldom fail to be deemed an undesirable restraint; and this feeling will commonly either vent itself in fervent extemporary prayer, or result in languor and decline under restriction to his form. The more rigorous and exclusive the confinement to a prescribed form, the more cold and lifeless will the prevailing formality generally be found. The excellent Mr. Baxter expresses the same idea with more unqualified strength. "A constant form," says he, "is a certain way to bring the soul to a cold, insensible, formal worship." (*Five Disputations*, &c., p. 385.)

8. Once more: prescribed liturgies, which remain in use from age to age, have a tendency to fix, to perpetuate, and even to coerce, the adoption and propagation of error. It is not forgotten, that the advocates of liturgies urge, as an argument in their favour, a consideration directly the converse of this, viz., that they tend, by their scriptural and pious character, to extend and perpetuate the reign of truth in a Church. Where their character is really thus thoroughly scriptural, they may, no doubt, exert, in this respect, a favourable influence; but where they teach or insinuate error, the mischief can scarcely fail to be deep, deplorable, and transmitted from generation to generation. Of this, painful examples might be given, if it were consistent with the brevity of this sketch to enter on such a field.*

ministers who are not tied to a liturgy, can immediately adapt their public prayers to the occasion, and pray for the royal recovery. In the case of a Church bound to a liturgy, before the form can be prepared and spread all over an extensive country, the royal patient may be recovered or dead—in neither case needing the prescribed form. If, in the meantime, the people are generally aware of the royal illness, but are bound to the usual form, from which there is no departure, how awkwardly straitened must the heart feel in such circumstances!—*L.*

* Any advantage arising from an evangelical liturgy, where the minister is unsound or heretical, there is every reason to believe, is

On the whole, after carefully comparing the advantages and disadvantages of free and prescribed prayer, the argument, whether drawn from Scripture, from ecclesiastical history, or from daily experience, is clearly in favour of free or extemporary prayer. Its generally edifying character may, indeed, sometimes be marred by weak and ignorant men; but we have no hesitation in saying, that the balance is manifestly in its favour. For, after all, the difficulty which sometimes occurs in rendering extemporary prayer impressive and edifying, is by no means obviated, in all cases, by the use of a prayer-book. Who has not witnessed the recitation of devotional forms conducted in such a manner as to disgust every hearer of taste, and to banish all seriousness from the mind? As long as ministers of the gospel are pious men—"workmen that need not be ashamed"—qualified "rightly to divide the Word of truth," and "mighty in the Scriptures," they will find no difficulty in conducting free prayer to the honour of religion, and to the edification of the Church. When they cease to possess this character, they must have forms, they ought to have forms, of devotion provided for them. It was precisely in such a state of things that the use of liturgies gradually crept into the Christian Church in the fifth and sixth centuries. But it is manifestly the fault of ministers, if extemporary prayer be not made, what it may, and ought ever to be—among the most tender, touching, and deeply impressive of all the services of the public sanctuary.*

greatly exaggerated. The presence of a pious liturgy did not prevent sad decline in doctrine in the Church of England, and in Continental Churches, where a liturgy is partially used. Indeed, few things seem more fitted to bewilder or disgust the people at religion, than to hear a heretical pastor reading sound words, and then immediately contradicting and disclaiming them by his preaching. Such inconsistency, if not hypocrisy, must be most injurious to all, especially to young and inquiring minds.—*L.*

* For an interesting and most learned discussion on the subject of liturgies, I cannot do better than refer the reader to "A Discourse concerning Liturgies, by the Rev. David Clarkson, 1689." After showing that there was no such thing as a liturgy in the Christian Church for many hundred years after Christ—that liturgies were brought in by ignorance, not a few prelates at the time being unable

SECTION II.—PRESBYTERIANS DO NOT OBSERVE HOLY-DAYS.

We believe, and teach in our public formularies, that "there is no day, under the gospel dispensation, com-

to sign their own name, he thus sums up in the last sentence:—"To conclude, they were not entertained till nothing was admitted into the Church, *de novo*, but corruptions or the issues thereof—no change made in the ancient usages, but for the worse—no motions from its primitive posture, but downwards into degeneracy, till such orders took place as respected not what was most agreeable to the rule and primitive practice, or what was best to uphold the life and power of religion in its solemn exercises, or what might secure it from the dead, heartless formality into which Christianity was sinking, and which is at this day the sediment of Popery; but what might show the power, and continue occasion for exercise of authority to the imperious and tyrannical, or what might comport with the ease of the lazy and slothful, or what might favour the weakness and insufficiency, and not detect the lameness and nakedness of those who had the place and name, but not the real accomplishments of masters and teachers;—in a word, not till the state of the Church was rather to be pitied than imitated, and what was discernible therein different from preceding times—mere wrecks and ruins, rather than patterns."

Should the reader wish to see the sentiments of the late Rev. Dr. M'Crie on the English liturgy, he will find them in an able review in the volume of his "Miscellaneous Writings," recently published. After defining what the question in debate is, viz., "Is it lawful and expedient to have set forms of prayer for every part of the public service of God, the use of which shall be authoritatively *imposed* upon all the ministers of the Church, and which they shall be bound to *repeat invariably* on the same days of every recurring year, without the slightest diminution, addition, or alteration?" he adds, "The Church of England says, that it shall be so within the whole of her extensive pale; so it has been for upwards of two centuries and a-half; and because they could not submit to this, thousands of serious persons have been subjected to great hardships and sufferings, and myriads have been driven from her communion. And we affirm, that no arrangement similar to this is to be found in the history either of the Jewish Church or of the Christian Church, during, at least, the five first centuries." (Pp. 210, 211.)

With regard to the Jewish Church, which, it is often alleged by Episcopalians, used a liturgy, the Doctor remarks, "Our author (the late Mr. Simeon of Cambridge) does not venture to assert that the Jewish Church had a common prayer-book, or that those who presided in this part of their religious service in the temple or in the synagogue, performed it according to precomposed and prescribed forms. If this had been the fact, would it not have been mentioned somewhere in the Old Testament? Would not these forms of prayer have been expressly recorded among the other forms of

manded to be kept holy, except the Lord's-day, which is the Christian Sabbath."

We believe, indeed, and declare, in the same formula, that it is both scriptural and rational to observe special days of fasting and thanksgiving, as the extraordinary dispensations of Divine Providence may direct. But we are persuaded, that even the keeping of these days, when they are made stated observances, recurring, of course, at particular times, whatever the aspect of providence may be, is calculated to promote formality and superstition, rather than the edification of the body of Christ.

Our reasons for entertaining this opinion are the following :—

1. We are persuaded that there is no scriptural warrant for such observances, either from precept or example. There is no hint in the New Testament that such days were either observed or recommended by the apostles, or by any of the Churches in their time. The mention of Easter in Acts xii. 4, has no application to this subject. Herod was a Jew, not a Christian; and, of course, had no desire to honour a Christian solemnity. The real meaning of the passage is, as the slightest inspection of the original will satisfy every intelligent reader, "Intending after the passover to bring him forth to the people."

2. We believe that the Scriptures not only do not warrant the observance of such days, but that they positively discountenance it. Let any one impartially weigh Col. ii. 16, and also Gal. iv. 9–11; and then say whether these passages do not evidently indicate that the inspired apostle disapproved of the observance of such days.

that Church, which have been so particularly and minutely transmitted to us? How strange is it, that Christians should so eagerly strive to 'put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples,' which was not imposed on the Church of God while she was in a state of minority, under tutors and governors, and in bondage under the elements of the world." Again, "The Jews had *forms* of psalmody, why had they not also *forms* of prayer for their public worship? We can produce their psalm-book; let our author produce their prayer-book."—*L.*

3. The observance of fasts and festivals, by divine direction, under the Old Testament economy, makes nothing in favour of such observances under the New Testament dispensation. That economy was no longer binding, or even lawful, after the New Testament Church was set up. It were just as reasonable to plead for the present use of the passover, the incense, and the burnt-offerings of the old economy, which were confessedly done away by the coming of Christ, as to argue in favour of human inventions, bearing some resemblance to them, as binding in the Christian Church.

4. The *history* of the introduction of stated fasts and festivals by the early Christians, speaks much against both their obligation and their edifying character. Their origin was ignoble. They were chiefly brought in by carnal policy, for the purpose of drawing into the Church Jews and Gentiles, who had both been accustomed to festivals and holy-days; and from the moment of their introduction, they became the signal for strife, or the monuments of worldly expedient and degrading superstition.

As there were no holy-days, excepting the Lord's-day, observed in the Christian Church while the apostles lived, and no hint given that they thought any other expedient or desirable; so we find no hint of any such observance having been adopted until towards the close of the second century. Then, the celebration of Easter gave rise to a controversy; the Asiatic Christians pleading for its observance at the same time which was prescribed for the Jewish Passover, and contending that they were supported in this by apostolical tradition; while the Western Church contended for its stated celebration on a certain Sunday, and urged, with equal confidence, apostolic tradition in favour of their scheme. Concerning this fierce and unhallowed controversy, Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, who wrote soon after the time of Eusebius, and begins his history where the latter closes his narrative, speaking on the controversy concerning Easter, expresses himself thus: "Neither the ancients, nor the fathers of later times (I mean such as favoured the Jewish custom), had sufficient cause to contend so eagerly about

the feast of Easter; for they considered not within themselves, that when the Jewish religion was changed into Christianity, the literal observance of the Mosaic law, and the types of things to come, wholly ceased. And this carries with it its own evidence. For no one of Christ's laws permits Christians to observe the rites of the Jews. Nay, the apostle hath in plain words forbidden it, where he abrogates circumcision, and exhorts us not to contend about feasts and holy-days. For, writing to the Galatians, he admonishes them not to observe days and months, and times and years. And unto the Colossians he is as plain as may be, declaring that the observance of such things was but a shadow. Neither the apostles nor the evangelists have enjoined on Christians the observance of Easter; but have left the remembrance of it to the free choice and discretion of those who have been benefited by such days. Men keep holy-days, because thereon they enjoy rest from toil and labour. Therefore, it comes to pass that in every place they do celebrate of their own accord the remembrance of the Lord's passion. But neither our Saviour nor his apostles have anywhere commanded us to observe it." (*Socrates*, lib. v., cap. 21.)

Here, then, is an eminent Christian writer who flourished early in the fifth century, who had made the history of the Church his particular study, who explicitly declares that neither Christ nor his apostles gave any command, or even countenance, to the observance of festival days; that it was brought into the Church by custom; and that in different parts of the Church there was diversity of practice in regard to this matter. With respect to Easter, in particular, this diversity was striking. We no sooner hear of its observance at all, than we begin to hear of contest, and interruption of Christian fellowship on account of it—some quoting the authority of some of the apostles for keeping this festival on one day; and others, with equal confidence, quoting the authority of other apostles for the selection of a different day—thereby clearly demonstrating that there was error somewhere, and rendering it highly probable that all

parties were wrong, and that no such observances at all were binding on Christians.

The festival of Easter, no doubt, was introduced in the second century, in place of the Passover, and in accommodation to the same Jewish prejudice which had said, even during the apostolic age, "Except ye be circumcised, after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Hence, it was generally called *pascha* and *pasch*, in conformity with the name of the Jewish festival, whose place it took. It seems to have received the title of Easter in Great Britain, from the circumstance, that when Christianity was introduced into that country, a great Pagan festival, celebrated at the same season of the year, in honour of the Pagan goddess Eostre, yielded its place to the Christian festival, which received, substantially, the name of the Pagan deity. The title of Easter, it is believed, is seldom used but by Britons and their descendants.

Few festivals are celebrated in the Romish Church, and in some Protestant Churches, with more interest and zeal than Christmas. Yet when Origen, about the middle of the third century, professes to give a list of the fasts and festivals which were observed in his day, he makes no mention of Christmas. From this fact, Sir Peter King, in his "Inquiry into the Constitution and Worship, &c., of the Primitive Church," &c., infers that no such festival was then observed; and adds, "It seems improbable that they should celebrate Christ's nativity, when they disagreed about the month and the day when Christ was born." Every month in the year has been assigned by different portions and writers of the Christian Church as the time of our Lord's nativity; and the final location of this, as well as other holy-days, in the ecclesiastical calendar, was adjusted rather upon astronomical and mathematical principles, than on any solid calculations of history.

5. But the motives and manner of introducing Christmas into the Christian Church, speak more strongly against it. Its real origin was this: Like many other observances, it was borrowed from the heathen. The

well-known Pagan festival among the Romans, distinguished by the title of Saturnalia, because instituted in honour of their fabled deity, Saturn, was celebrated by them with the greatest splendour, extravagance, and debauchery. It was, during its continuance, a season of freedom and equality; the master ceased to rule, and the slave to obey—the former waiting at his own table upon the latter, and submitting to the suspension of all order and the reign of universal frolic. The ceremonial of this festival was opened on the 19th of December, by lighting a profusion of waxen candles in the temple of Saturn; and by suspending in their temple, and in all their habitations, boughs of laurel, and various kinds of evergreen. The Christian Church, seeing the unhappy moral influence of this festival, perceiving her own members too often partaking in its licentiousness, and desirous, if possible, of effecting its abolition, appointed a festival, in honour of her Master's birth, nearly about the same time, for the purpose of superseding it. In doing this, the policy was to retain as many of those habits which had prevailed in the Saturnalia as could in any way be reconciled with the purity of Christianity. They made their new festival, therefore, a season of relaxation and mirth, of cheerful visiting, and mutual presents. They lighted candles in their places of worship, and adorned them with a profusion of evergreen boughs. Thus did the Romish Church borrow from the Pagans some of her most prominent observances; and thus have some observances of this origin been adopted and continued by Protestants.

6. It being evident, then, that stated fasts and festivals have no divine warrant, and that their use under the New Testament economy is a merehuman invention, we may ask those who are friendly to their observance, what limits ought to be set to their adoption and use in the Christian Church? If it be lawful to introduce five such days for stated observance, why not ten, twenty, or five score? A small number were, at an early period, brought into use by serious men, who thought they were thereby rendering God service, and extending the reign

of religion. But one after another was added, as superstition increased, until the calendar became burdened with between two and three hundred fasts and festivals, or saints' days, in each year; thus materially interfering with the claims of secular industry and loading the worship of God with a mass of superstitious observances, equally unfriendly to the temporal and eternal interests of men.* Let the principle once be admitted, that stated days of religious observance, which God has nowhere commanded, may properly be introduced into the Christian ritual, and, by parity of reasoning, every one who, from good motives, can effect the introduction of a new religious festival, is at liberty to do so. Upon this principle was built up the enormous mass of superstition which now distinguishes and corrupts the Romish Church.

7. The observance of the uncommanded holy-days is ever found to interfere with the due sanctification of the Lord's-day. Adding to the appointments of God is superstition; and superstition has ever been found unfriendly to genuine obedience. Its votaries, like the Jews of old, have ever been found more tenacious of their own inventions, of traditionary dreams, than of God's revealed code of duty. Accordingly, there is perhaps no fact more universal and unquestionable, than that the zealous observers of stated fasts and festivals are characteristically lax in the observance of that one day which God has eminently set apart for himself, and on the sanctification of which all the vital interests of practical religion are suspended. So it was among the Israelites of old. As early as the fifth century, Augustine complains that the superstitious observance of uncommanded rites

* This was one of the ways in which the Church of Rome, in its darkest days, seriously impoverished the people under her rule; and by keeping them dependent in their means, rendered them also dependent in their judgments. The wisdom of the *poor man* is almost always despised. In many countries, a third or more of time withdrawn from the workers of active industry, would be almost national ruin. The Creator and Proprietor of all has said, "*Six* days shalt thou *labour;*" but the Church of Rome knows better, and steps in with a contradiction to the extent of almost one half.—*L.*

betrayed many in his time into a spirit of irreverence and neglect towards those which were divinely appointed. So it is, notoriously, among the Romanists at the present day. And so, without any breach of charity, it may be said to be in every religious community in which zeal for the observance of uncommanded holy-days prevails. It is true, many in these communities tell us that the observance of holy-days, devoted to particular persons and events in the history of the Church, has a manifest and strong tendency to increase the spirit of piety. But if this be so, we might expect to find much more scriptural piety in the Romish Church than in any other, since holy-days are ten times more numerous in that denomination than in the system of any Protestant Church. But is it so? Let those who have eyes to see, and ears to hear, decide.*

If the foregoing allegations be in any measure well founded; if there be no warrant in God's Word for any observances of this kind; if, on the contrary, the Scriptures positively discourage them; if the history of their introduction and increase mark an unhallowed origin; if, when we once open the door to such human inventions, no one can say how or when it may be closed; and if the observance of days, not appointed of God, has ever been found to exert an unfriendly influence on the sanctification of that holy day which God has appointed, surely we need no farther proof that it is wise to discard them from our ecclesiastical system.

SECTION III.—WE REJECT GODFATHERS AND GODMOTHERS IN BAPTISM.

It is well known that the Presbyterian Church differs from Roman Catholics and Episcopalians in regard to

* And yet this is the state of things which the new non-Protestant Anglican school would revive, under the penalty of unchurching nine-tenths of Protestant Christendom, unless they forthwith comply with its demands; and sensible men, who were *once* evangelical, are imposed upon by such pretensions, and stand in awe of revived Popery! This is the meaning of going back to the principles and practices of the primitive Church!—*L.*

sponsors in baptism. We differ in two respects. First, in not requiring or encouraging the appearance of any other sponsors, in the baptism of children, than the parents, when they are living, and qualified to present themselves in this character; and, secondly, in not requiring, or even admitting, any sponsors at all in cases of adult baptism. And we adopt this principle and practice for the following reasons:—

1. There is not a shadow of evidence in the New Testament, that any other sponsors than parents were ever admitted to answer for their children in baptism in the apostolic Church; nor is any text of Scripture attempted to be adduced in its support by the warmest friends of this practice. When the jailer of Philippi was baptized, "he and all his straightway;" and when Lydia and "her household" were baptized, we read of no sponsors but the heads of these families, whose faith entitled them to present their households to receive the appropriate seal of faith.

2. We find no trace of any other sponsors than parents during the first five hundred years after Christ. When some persons, in the time of Augustine, who flourished toward the close of the fourth, and the beginning of the fifth century, contended that it was not lawful, in any case, for any, excepting their natural parents, to offer children in baptism, that learned and pious father opposed them, and gave it as his opinion, that, in extraordinary cases, as, for example, when the parents were dead, when they were not professing Christians, when they cruelly forsook and exposed their offspring, and when Christian masters had young slaves committed to their charge—in these cases (and the pious father mentions no others) he maintains that any professing Christians, who should be willing to undertake the charge, might, with propriety, take such children, offer them in baptism, and become responsible for their Christian education. In this principle and practice, all intelligent and consistent Presbyterians are agreed. The learned Bingham, an Episcopal divine of great industry and erudition, seems to have taken unwearied pains, in his "Ecclesiastical

Antiquities," to collect every scrap of testimony within his reach, in favour of the early origin of sponsors. But he utterly fails of producing even plausible evidence to this amount; and at length candidly acknowledges that, in the early ages, parents were, in all ordinary cases, the presenters and sureties of their own children; and that children were presented by others only in extraordinary cases, such as those already stated, when their parents could not present them. It was not until the Council of Mentz, in the ninth century, that the Church of Rome forbade the appearance of parents as sponsors for their own children, and required this service to be surrendered to other hands.

3. The subsequent history of this practice marks the progress of superstition. Mention is made by Cyril in the fifth century, and by Fulgentius in the sixth, of sponsors in some peculiar cases of adult baptism. When adults, about to be baptized, were dumb, or under the power of delirium, through disease, and, of course, unable to speak for themselves, or to make the usual profession; in such cases, it was customary for some friend, or friends, to answer for them, and to bear testimony to their good character, and to the fact of their having sufficient knowledge, and having before expressed a desire to be baptized. For this there was, undoubtedly, at least some colour of reason; and the same thing might, perhaps, be done without impropriety in some conceivable circumstances now. From this, however, there was a transition soon made to the use of sponsors in all cases of adult baptism. This latter, however, was upon a different principle from the former. When adults had the use of speech and reason, and were able to answer for themselves, the sponsors provided for such never answered nor professed for them. This was invariably done by the adult himself. Their only business, as it would appear, was to be a kind of curators or guardians of the spiritual life of the persons baptized. This office was generally fulfilled, in each Church, by the deacons, when adult males were baptized; and by the deaconesses when females came forward to receive this ordinance.

Hence, in the Roman Catholic, and some Protestant sects, the practice was ultimately established of providing godfathers and godmothers in all cases of adult baptism.

4. Among the pious Waldenses and Albigenses, in the middle ages, no other sponsors than parents were in common use. But where the parents were dead, or absent, or unable on any account to act, other professors of religion, who were benevolent enough to undertake the charge, were allowed to appear in their place, and answer and act in their stead.

5. If, then, the use of godfathers and godmothers, as distinct from parents, in baptism, has no countenance in the Word of God; if it was unknown in the Church during the first five hundred years after Christ; and if it was superstitious in its origin, and connected with other superstitions in its progress, we have, undoubtedly, sufficient reason for rejecting the practice. When the system is to set aside parents in this solemn transaction; to require others to take their places, and make engagements which they alone, for the most part, are qualified to make; and when, in pursuance of this system, thousands are daily making engagements which they never think of fulfilling, and, in most cases, notoriously have it not in their power to fulfil, and, indeed, appear to feel no special obligation to fulfil, we are constrained to regard it as a human invention, altogether unwarranted, and adapted, on a variety of accounts, to generate evil rather than good.

According to one of the canons of the Church of England, "parents are not to be urged to be present when their children are baptized, nor to be permitted to stand as sponsors for their own children." That is, the parents, to whom God and nature have committed the education of children—in whose families they are to grow up—under whose eye and immediate care their principles, manners, and character are to be formed—shall not be allowed to take even a part in their dedication to God, nor encouraged even to be present at the solemn transaction! In the Protestant Episcopal Church in this

country, " parents shall be admitted as sponsors, if it be desired." But in both countries, it is required that there be sponsors for all adults, as well as for infants.*

SECTION IV.—THE SIGN OF THE CROSS IN BAPTISM.

This is one of the additions to the baptismal rite which Protestant Episcopalians have adopted from the Romanists, and which Presbyterians have always rejected. A large body of the most pious and learned divines of the Established Church of England, in an early part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when the reformation of that Church was about to be conclusively settled, earnestly petitioned that the sign of the cross in

* The Prelatical Church is a curious mixture of high claims and low practices. We have seen much of the first, we may here advert to one of the second. One would think, from the way in which ordination and the sacraments are spoken of—the exclusive channels of salvation, if not salvation itself—that the administration of baptism by any one save a prelatically ordained officer, would be shrunk from as sacrilege; but so it is, that the Church of England, following the Church of Rome, recognises and practises lay baptism !—baptism by commanding officers in the army or navy, who have no holy orders ! What are we to think of the consistency of a system which allows any layman, however humble, to dispense baptism as validly as the highest bishop; and which, at the same time, is unchurching nine-tenths of Protestant Christendom, because its Churches have no Episcopal ordination ? Is baptism—by many accounted regeneration itself—less important than ordination ? Is this the language of Scripture ?

For farther information, the reader is directed to the long and learned judgment of Sir Herbert Jenner, in the Court of Arches, June, 1841; in the course of which he shows, that, in the early Church of the fourth and fifth centuries (the Church which is idolized by the new Anglican school), lay baptism was almost universal in the Eastern and Western Churches ; that, in England, previous to the Reformation, so established was the practice, that ministers were called to instruct their parishioners how tc administer the ordinance in a decent manner, as all might be called upon to do so: that, after the Reformation, it was a frequent and serious ground of complaint by the Puritans against the Church of England, that *women* were allowed to baptize; that there were occasional controversies on the subject of lay baptism; but that the Church of England all along held, and continues to hold, its validity. Hence the judge sentenced Mr. Escott, the Puseyite clergyman, who had refused to bury a Wesleyan child on the ground that it had not been baptized (because baptized by a Dissenting minister—layman in the sense of the new school), to three months' suspension, and the costs of the suit.—*L.*

baptism, as well as stated fasts and festivals, godfathers and godmothers in baptism, kneeling at the Lord's supper, bowing at the name of Jesus, &c., might be abolished. When their petitions to this amount were read, and their arguments heard, in the lower house of Convocation, the vote was taken, and passed by a majority of those present; forty-three voting in favour of granting the prayer of the petitioners—in other words, in favour of abolishing the rites complained of; and thirty-five against it. But when the proxies were called for and counted, the scale was turned; those in favour of the abolition being fifty-eight, and those against it fifty-nine. So that, by a solemn vote of the Convocation, the several rites regarded and complained of as Popish superstitions, and the sign of the cross among the rest, were retained in the Church only by a majority of one.

In the objections at that time urged against the sign of the cross in baptism, by those learned and venerable Episcopal divines, Presbyterians have ever concurred. These objections are the following:—

1. Not the smallest countenance is to be found in Scripture for any such addition to the baptismal rite. Nothing of this kind is pretended to be produced by its most zealous advocates. All acknowledge it to be a human invention.

2. In the records of the earliest writers by whom it is mentioned, it appears associated with so much superstition, as cannot fail to discredit it in the view of all intelligent Christians. From the very same sources from which we gather the information that, in the second and third centuries, the sign of the cross was added to the rite of baptism, we also learn that there were added to the same ordinance a number of other human inventions—such as "exorcising" the candidate for baptism, to drive away evil spirits; putting into his mouth a mixture of milk and honey, as a symbol of his childhood in a new life; anointing with spittle and with oil, and the laying on of hands, for the purpose of imparting the Holy Spirit. These are all deemed by Protestants unwarranted additions to Christ's simple appointment;

and in what respect does the sign of the cross stand upon better ground?

3. Tertullian, one of the earliest writers in whom we find any mention made of the sign of the cross as a religious rite, represents it as used in his day with a degree of superstition scarcely credible in such an early age, and which ought to operate as a permanent warning to all succeeding ages. "Every step," says he, "that we take—when we come in and when we go out; when we put on our clothes or our shoes; when we bathe, eat, light up candles, go to bed, or sit down—we mark our foreheads with the sign of the cross. If for these, and other acts of discipline of the same kind, you demand a text of Scripture, you will find none; but tradition will be alleged as the prescriber of them." (*De Corona*, cap. iii.) The sign of the cross was thought, by those deluded votaries of superstition, a sure preservative against all sorts of malignity, poisons, or fascination, and effectual to drive away evil spirits. The principal Fathers of the fourth century affirm that it was the constant and undoubted means of working many miracles. "This sign," says Chrysostom, "both in the days of our forefathers and our own, has thrown open gates that were shut, destroyed the effect of poisonous drugs, disarmed the force of hemlock, and cured the bites of venomous beasts." (Tom. vii., p. 552, A.)

4. When we consider the miserable superstition with which the use of the sign of the cross is constantly marked by Roman Catholics—that they regard it as essential to the validity of the ordinance of baptism; that they adore it; that they apply it in every step and act of religious life; that many of them consider no oath as binding which is taken on the Bible without the figure of the cross upon it; and that they rely upon it as a kind of talisman, connected with every blessing; surely, when we see this degrading system of superstition connected with this sign, acknowledged on all hands to be a mere human invention, it is no wonder that enlightened and conscientious Christians should feel constrained to lay it aside.

SECTION V.—WE REJECT THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION.

In the apostolic Church there was no such rite as that which, under this name, has been long established in the Romish communion as a sacrament, and adopted in some Protestant Churches as a solemnity, in their view, if not commanded, yet as both expressive and edifying. In giving the views of Presbyterians on this subject, it is not at all intended to condemn those who think proper to employ the rite in question; but only to state with brevity some of the reasons why the venerated fathers of our Church thought proper to exclude it from our truly primitive and apostolical ritual, and why their sons, to the present hour, have persisted in the same course.

1. We find no warrant for this rite in the Word of God. Indeed, its most intelligent and zealous advocates do not pretend to adduce any testimony from Scripture in its behalf.

2. Quite as little support for it is to be found in the purest and best ages of uninspired antiquity. Toward the close of the second century, indeed, and the beginning of the third, among several human additions to the rite of baptism which had crept into the Church—such as exorcising the infant, to drive away evil spirits, putting a mixture of milk and honey into his mouth, anointing him with spittle and with oil, in the form of a cross—it became customary to lay on hands, for the purpose of imparting the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This laying on of hands, however, was always done immediately after the application of water, and always by the same minister who performed the baptism. Of course, every one who was authorized to baptize, was also authorized to lay on hands upon the baptized individual. As this was a mere human invention, so it took the course which human inventions are apt to take. It was modified as the pride and the selfishness of ecclesiastics prompted. When Prelacy arose, it became customary to reserve this solemn imposition of hands to prelates, as a part of their official prerogative. As soon as convenient after baptism, the infant was presented to the

bishop, to receive from him the imposition of hands, for conveying the gifts of the Spirit. Jerome, in the fourth century, bears witness, however, that this was done rather for the sake of honouring their office, than in obedience to any divine warrant. But, in process of time, another modification of the rite was introduced. The imposition of the bishop's hands did not take place immediately after baptism, nor even in the infancy of the baptized individual, but was postponed for a number of years, according to circumstances, and sometimes even to adult age. Then the young person, or adult, was presented with great formality to the bishop, for his peculiar benediction. Among many proofs that this was not the original nature of the rite, is the notorious fact, that throughout the whole Greek Church, at the present time, the laying on of hands is administered, for the most part, in close connection with baptism, and is dispensed by any priest who is empowered to baptize, as was done in the third and fourth centuries, before the Greek Church was separated from the Latin. In like manner, in the Lutheran and other German Churches, where a sort of confirmation is retained, although they have ecclesiastical superintendents or seniors, the act of laying on hands is not reserved to them, but is performed by each pastor for the children of his parochial charge.

3. The rite of confirmation is not only altogether destitute of divine warrant, but it is also superfluous. As it was plainly, at first, a human invention, founded on the superstitious belief that, by the laying on of hands, the special gifts of the Holy Spirit were to be continued in the Church; so it is unnecessary. It answers no practical purpose which is not provided for quite as well, to say the least, in the Presbyterian Church, which rejects it. It is said to be desirable that there should be some transaction or solemnity by which young people, who have been baptized in their infancy, may be called to recognise their religious obligations, and, as it were, to take upon themselves the profession and the vows made on their behalf in baptism. Granted. There can

be no doubt that such a solemnity is both reasonable in itself, and edifying in its tendency. But have we not just such a solemnity in the Lord's supper; an ordinance divinely instituted; an ordinance on which all are qualified to attend, and ought to attend, who are qualified to take on themselves, in any scriptural or rational sense, their baptismal obligations; an ordinance, in fact, specifically intended, among other things, to answer this very purpose, viz., the purpose of making a personal acknowledgment and profession of the truth, the service, and the hopes of Christ? have we not in the sacramental supper just such a solemnity as we need for the purpose in question, simple, rational, scriptural, and to which all our children may come just so soon as they are prepared, in any suitable manner, to confess Christ before men? We do not need confirmation, then, for the purpose for which it is proposed. We have something better, because appointed of God; quite as expressive, more solemn, and free from certain objectionable features, which are next to be mentioned.

4. Finally; we reject the rite of confirmation in our Church, because, in addition to all the reasons which have been mentioned, we consider the formulary prescribed for its administration in the Church of England, and substantially adopted in the Episcopal Church in this country, as liable to the most serious objections. We do not think it a duty to administer, in any form, a rite which the Saviour never appointed; but our repugnance is greatly increased by the language in which the rite in question is dispensed by those who employ it. In the "Order of Confirmation," as prescribed and used in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, the following language occurs:—"Before the act of laying on hands, the officiating bishop, in his prayer, repeats the following sentence: 'Almighty and ever-living God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants, by water, and the *Holy Ghost*, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins,'" &c. And again, in another prayer after the imposition of hands, he speaks to the Searcher of hearts thus: "We make our humble

supplications unto thee for these thy servants, upon whom, after the example of thy holy apostles, we have now laid our hands, to certify them by this sign of thy favour and gracious goodness toward them," &c. And also, in the act of laying on hands, assuming that all who are kneeling before him already have the holy, sanctifying Spirit of Christ, he prays that they "may all daily increase in this Holy Spirit more and more."

Such is the language addressed to large circles of young people of both sexes, many of whom, there is every reason to fear, are very far from having been "born of the Spirit," in the scriptural sense of that phrase; nay, some of whom manifest so little seriousness, that any pastor of enlightened piety would be pained to see them at a communion table; yet the bishop pronounces them *all*, and he appeals to Heaven for the truth of his sentence —he pronounces them *all* regenerate, not only by water, but also by the *Holy Ghost;* certifies to them, in the name of God, that they are objects of the divine "favour;" and declares that, being already in a state of grace and reconciliation with God, they are called to "grow in grace," and to "increase in the Holy Spirit more and more."

An enlightened Presbyterian minister would consider himself, if he were to use such language to such a circle, as encouraging radical misapprehensions of the nature of true religion; as perverting the doctrine of regeneration by the Holy Spirit; and as speaking a language adapted fatally to deceive the souls of those whom he addressed. Surely, with such views, we should be highly criminal were we to adopt such a rite, and dispense it after such an example.

SECTION VI.—WE REJECT KNEELING AT THE LORD'S SUPPER.

This is another part of the Romish ritual, which a large body of the most pious and learned divines of the Church of England, at the period of the Reformation, were earnestly desirous of having laid aside; but they were overruled by the queen and court clergy, who chose

to retain it; and it has ever since found a place in the Protestant Episcopal Church. It is well known that Presbyterians differ, in this respect, from their Episcopal neighbours. They prefer what has been commonly called "the table posture," for such reasons as the following:—

1. It is granted, on all hands, that the posture in which the Lord's supper was first administered by the Saviour himself, was that in which it was customary to receive ordinary meals. It is not known that any one denies or doubts this. The evangelists are too explicit in their statement of this fact to admit of doubt. The Evangelist Matthew declares—"Now, when the evening was come, he *sat down* with the twelve. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples," &c. But if the Saviour himself chose this posture, as most agreeable to his will, may we not conclude that it is, on the whole, the wisest and best?

2. It is very certain that kneeling at the Lord's table was unknown in the Christian Church for a number of centuries after the apostolic age. Indeed, in the second, third, and following centuries, it was accounted unlawful even to kneel on the Lord's-day; this posture being reserved for days of fasting and humiliation. This is asserted by Tertullian; and the Council of Nice passed a solemn decree to the same amount, because on that day is celebrated the joyful remembrance of our Lord's resurrection. The posture, both of public prayer on the Lord's-day and of receiving the communion, was invariably standing. The proof of this is so complete as to preclude the possibility of doubt. The most ardent friends of kneeling do not pretend, so far as is now recollected, to find any example of this posture in the whole history of the Church, prior to the thirteenth century; that is, not until the Papacy had reached the summit of its system of corruption. And, accordingly, in the Greek Church, which separated from the Latin before the doctrine of transubstantiation arose, kneeling at the communion was unknown. In short, kneeling at the Lord's table was not introduced until transubstan-

tiation arose; and with transubstantiation it ought, by Protestants, to have been laid aside. When men began to believe that the sacramental elements were really transmuted into the body and blood of the Redeemer, there was some colour of apology for kneeling and adoring them. But when this error was abandoned, that which had grown out of it ought to have been abandoned also.

The essential nature of the eucharist renders the attendance upon it in a kneeling posture incongruous, and, of course, unsuitable. This ordinance is a feast—a feast of love, joy, and thanksgiving. The very name eucharist, implies as much. It is intended to be a sign of love, confidence, and affectionate fellowship, between each communicant and the Master of the feast, and between all the members of his body. It is also intended to be an emblem and a means of that spiritual nourishment which is found in feeding by faith, and in a spiritual sense, on the body and blood of the Redeemer, set forth in this ordinance as crucified for us. Now, it has been often asked—"In what nation is it thought suitable to kneel at banquets?" Where do men eat and drink upon their knees? True, indeed, humility and penitence become us in every approach to God, and certainly in no case more peculiarly than when we celebrate the wonders of grace and love manifest in the Saviour's dying for us; yet it is equally true, that as the ordinance is characteristically a feast of confidence, fellowship, joy, and thanksgiving, so the exercises and the posture most becoming the attendance on it, are those which indicate gladness, gratitude, and affectionate intercourse. He must be strangely prejudiced in favour of a superstitious precedent, who can persuade himself that kneeling is the most suitable expression of those exercises.

4. Finally; the abuse and the misapprehension of the practice of kneeling at the Lord's supper, are considerations of no small weight in the minds of those who reject this practice. As it originated in gross error, so it is adapted to nourish error and superstition; and however understood by intelligent Christians, it has been misap-

prehended, and will be, as long as it shall be used, misapprehended by many ignorant minds. Accordingly, as before stated, when the English liturgy was revised, and about to be ultimately settled, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, some of the most pious and learned divines of that Church entreated that kneeling at the eucharist might either be abolished altogether, or, at least, left optional or indifferent. When the divines appointed to report on the subject brought in a report which left it indifferent, the queen drew her pen over the lines which represented it, and made the practice binding. And all that the friends of abolishing the practice could obtain, was a rubric, or marginal advertisement, declaring that by communicating in this posture no worship of the elements was intended. This obstinate adherence to the practice in question greatly grieved the foreign Protestants; and the learned Beza wrote to Archbishop Grindal on the subject, in a style of respectful but firm remonstrance. "If," says Beza, "you have rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the practice of adoring the host, why do you symbolize with Popery, and seem to hold both, by kneeling at the sacrament? Kneeling had never been thought of, had it not been for transubstantiation." The archbishop replied, "That though the sacrament was to be received kneeling, yet the rubric accompanied the service-book, and informed the people that no adoration of the elements was intended." "O! I understand you," said Beza: "there was a certain great lord who repaired his house, and, having finished it, left before his gate a great stone, for which he had no occasion. This stone caused many people in the dark to stumble and fall. Complaint was made to his lordship, and many an humble petition was presented, praying for the removal of the stone; but he remained long obstinate. At length he condescended to order a lantern to be hung over it. 'My lord,' said one, 'if you would be pleased to rid yourself of farther solicitation, and to quiet all parties, order the stone and the candle to be both removed.'"

SECTION VII.—WE DO NOT ADMINISTER THE LORD'S SUPPER IN PRIVATE.

Few ordinances have been more misapprehended and perverted than the Lord's supper. Before the close of the third century, superstitious views of its efficacy, and its necessity to salvation, began to be adopted, and led to a corresponding practice. Entirely mistaking the meaning of John vi. 53, many Christians of that day supposed that no one could die safely without having participated of this ordinance. Accordingly, it was not only administered to all adult persons, who professed to be the disciples of Christ, but also to infants, soon after their baptism. Nay, to such an extravagant height was this frenzy of superstition carried, that when any one had died suddenly, without having partaken of this sacrament, the consecrated elements were, in many instances, thrust into the mouth of the lifeless corpse, in hope that it might not yet be too late to impart a saving benefit to the deceased. This delusion soon produced, or rather strongly implied, the Popish doctrine, that this sacrament, as well as baptism, carried with it an inherent efficacy (an *opus operatum*, as they expressed it), which insured a saving operation in all cases in which it was regularly administered. From this, the transition was easy to the notion, that the consecrated elements, when exhibited, cured diseases, and accomplished many other wonderful miracles. Hence, these elements, before the commencement of the third century, after being dispensed in the public assembly, were sent, generally by deacons, to those who, on any account, were absent. Not long afterwards, the sick, the dying, and those who were confined on any account to their dwelling, had a portion of the elements despatched to them, either by ecclesiastics, or, if more convenient, by the hands of laymen, and even children. Some, on receiving the elements in church, contrived to carry away with them a portion, and were in the habit of taking a small part of this portion every day, for thirty or forty days together. Nay, some carried a portion of the sacrament (as they expressed it) with

them on long journeys and voyages, had recourse to it as a defence in cases of danger, and inserted some portion of it in plasters for healing wounds and ulcers. All this under the impression that these sacramental elements had an inherent energy of the most potent and beneficial kind. No wonder that, wherever these sentiments prevailed, private communion, if such an expression may be allowed, was universal. The sacrament in a great measure lost its character as a social ordinance; and the symbols of the Redeemer's broken body and shed blood were considered as invested with a sort of magical influence wherever they appeared—to be carried about the person as an amulet for defence, and resorted to as a medicine of sovereign power.

It is true, some of these views and habits were checked by the rise of the doctrine of transubstantiation. When the elements were believed, by the consecrating prayer, to have been transmuted into the real body and blood of Christ, it was thought indecent to carry them home, to deposit them in a chest or cupboard, and to swallow a small portion every day. Still the most humiliating superstitions, as to the consecrated elements, continued to prevail.

When the Reformation took place in the land of our fathers, many of these views and habits, and especially the more gross of them, were happily corrected. Still it is to be lamented that the Reformation in the Church of England, in respect to this ordinance, as well as some others, was not more thorough; and that, after all the remonstrances and importunity of the most venerable and pious divines of that Church, a number of things were left in use, which it were to be wished had been laid aside. Of these the habit of private communion is one. The eucharist is administered by the clergy of that Church, every day, to the sick and the dying, with scarcely any scruple, whenever it is requested. To the worldly, the careless, and even the most profligate, it is freely carried, when they come to die, if they desire it; indeed, some have supposed that any minister who should publicly refuse to administer this ordinance to a sick

person, when requested, would be liable, in that country, to a civil prosecution. Suffice it to say, that such a refusal is very seldom given. Even criminals of the most profligate character, just before their execution, always have this sacrament administered to them, if they are willing to receive it, and that when no appearance whatever of genuine penitence is manifested.*

Presbyterian ministers, in all ordinary cases, decline administering the Lord's supper to the sick and the dying, and generally in private houses, for reasons which appear to them conclusive. They are such as these:—

1. They consider this ordinance as social and ecclesiastical in its very nature. It is a communion, in which the idea of a "solitary mass," as admitted among Papists, would seem to be an absurdity.

2. We find no warrant for private communion in the New Testament. It is true, we read of Christians, in the apostolic age, "breaking bread from house to house;" but that is, evidently, a mode of expressing their ordinary worshipping assemblies. They had no ecclesiastical buildings. They worshipped altogether in private houses, in "upper chambers," &c. There, of course, they administered the communion to as many as could come together. And as they could not occupy the same apartment statedly, or, at any rate, long together, on account of the vigilance of their persecutors, they went "from house to house" to worship, as circumstances invited; or in a number of houses at the same time, where Christians were too numerous for a single dwelling. We read of no instance of the sacramental symbols being

* See the cases of the hardened Despard and Bellingham, mentioned in the *Christian Observer*, vol. xiii., p. 6.—*M.*

To these many others might be added. For instance, Courvoisier, the recent and unprovoked murderer of a venerable old nobleman, whose case excited such intense interest throughout the country. This man, so far as one could learn from the public prints, did not give one symptom of genuine repentance. He seems, most unnecessarily, to have lied to the last moment; and yet every pious mind was shocked with reading that he was called to partake, and actually did partake, of the memorials of the redeeming love of Christ. What profanation could be more fearful! and yet the Episcopal Church, and particularly its new school, affect prodigious reverence for ordinances.—*L.*

carried to an individual on a sick-bed. On the contrary, when the inspired apostle gives directions that the sick be visited and prayed with by the "elders of the Church" (James v. 14), he says not a word of administering to them the communion.

3. If persons, on their dying-beds, earnestly desire this ordinance to be administered to them, as a *viaticum*, or preparation for death, and as a kind of pledge of the divine favour and acceptance, we believe that, on this very account, it ought to be refused them. To comply with their wishes, at least in many cases, is to encourage them to rely on the power of an external sign, rather than on the merit of the Saviour himself. Such views being, manifestly, unscriptural, false, and adapted to deceive and destroy the soul, ought by no means to be countenanced. But what can tend more directly to favour, and even nurture, these views, than to hasten with the sacramental memorials to the bed-side of every dying person who desires them? Ought the evident propensity of careless and ungodly men to fly to this ordinance as the last refuge of a guilty conscience, to be deliberately promoted by the ministers of religion?

4. If this practice be once begun, where is it to end? All men are serious when they come to die. Even the most profane and licentious, in that crisis, are commonly in no small degree anxious and alarmed, and disposed to lay hold of every thing that seems favourable to the smallest hope. Yet every wise man, who has lived long, and observed much, is deeply suspicious of the sincerity of death-bed penitents. What is a conscientious minister to do in such cases? How is he to draw the line between those who are and those who are not, in his judgment, fit subjects for this ordinance? Is it not unseasonable, as well as distressing, to have any thing like arguing or disputing with the sick and the dying on such a subject? On the one hand, if we faithfully refuse to administer the ordinance where the dying man gives no evidence of either knowledge or faith—shall we not agitate the patient, distress his friends, and give against him a kind of public sentence, so far as our judgment goes, of his

reprobation? And, on the other hand, if we strain conscience, and, in compliance with earnest wishes, administer the ordinance to those who give no evidence whatever of fitness for it, shall we not run the risk of deceiving and destroying souls, by lulling them asleep in sin, and encouraging reliance on an external sign of grace? Will not by-standers be likely to be fatally injured? And shall we not, by every such act, incur great guilt in the sight of God?

5. By declining, in all ordinary cases, to administer this ordinance on sick-beds, either to saints or sinners, we avoid these embarrassments, so deep and trying to a conscientious man; we avoid multiplied evils, both to the dying themselves and their surviving friends, and we shall take a course better adapted than any other to impress upon the minds of men that great and vital truth, that the atoning sacrifice and perfect righteousness of the Redeemer, imputed to us, and received by faith alone, are the only scriptural foundation of hope toward God; that, without this faith, ordinances are unavailing; and with it, though we may be deprived, by the providence of God, of an opportunity of attending on outward ordinances in their prescribed order of administration, all is safe for time and eternity. The more solemnly and unceasingly these sentiments are inculcated, the more we shall be likely to benefit the souls of men; and the more frequently we countenance any practice which seems to encourage a reliance on any external rite as a refuge in the hour of death, we contribute to the prevalence of a system most unscriptural, deceptive, and fatal in its tendency.

It was remarked, that Presbyterians take this ground, and act upon these principles, in all ordinary cases. It has sometimes happened, however, that a devout and exemplary communicant of our Church, after long enjoying the privileges of the sanctuary, has been confined for several, perhaps for many years, to a bed of sickness, and been, of course, wholly unable to enjoy a communion season in the ordinary form. In such cases Presbyterian ministers have sometimes taken the

elders of the Church with them, and also invited half-a-dozen other friends of the sick person—thus making, in reality, "a Church," meeting by its representatives—and administered the communion in the sick-chamber. To this no solid objection is perceived. But the moment we open the door—unless in very extraordinary cases indeed—to the practice of carrying this sacrament to those who have wholly neglected it during their lives, but importunately call for it as a passport to heaven in the hour of nature's extremity, we countenance superstition, we deceive souls, and we pave the way for abuses and temptations, of which no one can calculate the consequences, or see the end.

SECTION VIII.—WE REJECT BOWING AT THE NAME OF JESUS.

Those who have frequently witnessed the worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church, have no doubt observed that when the name of Jesus occurs in repeating the Apostles' Creed, there is a sensible obeisance or bowing of the knee, which occurs in pronouncing no other name in the public service. The obeisance is, in many cases, confined to the pronunciation of the name as it occurs in the creed. The same name may be pronounced in the other parts of the liturgy, or in the sermon, without being accompanied with any such act of reverence. Presbyterians have never adopted this practice, for the following reasons:—

1. We find no semblance of a warrant for it in Scripture. Some Episcopal apologists, indeed, for this practice, of the inferior and less intelligent class, have cited in its defence Phil. ii. 10; but this plea has been abandoned, it is believed, by all truly learned and judicious friends of that denomination. Dr. Nichols, one of the most zealous and able advocates of the ritual of the Church of England, expressly says: "We are not so dull as to think that these words can be rigorously applied to this purpose."

2. It seems unaccountable that the obeisance in

question should be so pointedly made at this name of the Saviour, and not at all when his other titles are pronounced. When his titles of God, Redeemer, Saviour, Christ, Immanuel, and even Jehovah, are pronounced, no such testimonial of reverence is manifested. Can any good reason, either in the Bible or out of it, be assigned for this difference? We feel as if, with our views of the subject, it would be superstition in us to adopt or countenance such a practice.

3. Is not the habit of such observances without warrant, and, as would seem, without reason, plainly adapted to beget a spirit of superstition, and to occupy our minds with the commandments of men, rather than with the ordinances of Heaven? It will, perhaps, be said in reply, that we surely cannot pronounce the name of Jesus, our adorable Saviour, with too much reverence; why, then, find fault with an act of obeisance at his glorious name? True; every possible degree of reverence is his due. But why not manifest the same at the pronunciation of all his adorable and official names? Suppose any one were to single out a particular verse of Holy Scripture, and whenever he read that verse were to bow his head, or bend his knees, in token of reverence, but wholly to omit this act of obeisance in reading all other parts of Scripture, even those of exactly the same import as the verse thus distinguished—should we not consider his conduct as an example of strange caprice, or of still more strange superstition? Such, however, precisely, is the case before us. And if this mode of reading the Scriptures were enjoined by ecclesiastical authority, we should, doubtless, consider it as still more strange. Even this, however, is done in the case now under consideration. For the eighteenth canon of the Church of England contains the following injunction: "When, in the time of divine service, the Lord Jesus shall be mentioned, due and lowly reverence shall be done by all persons present, as it hath been accustomed."

This practice of bowing at the name of Jesus was never heard of in the Christian Church, so far as is now

recollected, until the *fifteenth century*. Some trace it to the Papal reign of Gregory X., in the thirteenth century. It may possibly have existed then; but the earliest authoritative injunction of it that is remembered, is that of the Council of Basil, in 1435. The deplorable state of the Church at that time, both in respect to superstition and profligacy, will not furnish, it is presumed, a very strong recommendation of a rite which then took its rise. A more worthy origin of it is unknown.

As to the practice of praying toward the east, and that of wearing in the reading desk, or during the prayers, a white surplice, they are too inconsiderable to be made the subjects of particular discussion. Nevertheless, as this manual is intended to give a comprehensive view of the points in which we differ from surrounding denominations, it may not be amiss to say, in passing, that both the practices last mentioned were borrowed from the Pagans. And although plausible reasons soon began to be urged in their favour, reasons which were made to wear a Christian aspect, yet their heathen origin is unquestionable. True, there is no sin in them. They are little things—too little to be formally animadverted upon. Yet they are among the things which we think it our duty to reject. And when asked, as we sometimes are, why we do not adopt them, we have only to say, that our desire is to keep as closely as we can to "the simplicity that is in Christ;" that to indulge superstition in trivial things, is as really censurable in principle, as in things of more importance; and that "the beginning of evil is like the letting out of water." And especially when we recollect, that three centuries have not elapsed since some of these very things were made terms of communion in the land of our fathers; and some of the most pious and venerable men that ever lived in that land were fined, imprisoned, and ejected from office, because, according to the popular language of that day, they "scrupled the habits," or the prescribed dress, we shall see the evil of tampering with uncommanded rites.

SECTION IX.—WE REJECT THE READING OF APOCRYPHAL BOOKS IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

The Church of Rome considers a number of the books of the Apocrypha as canonical; that is, as belonging to the inspired canon, and as of equal authority with any of the books of the Old or New Testament; and accordingly orders them to be read in her public assemblies, just as the inspired Scriptures. Protestants, with one voice, deny that the Apocryphal books make any part of the sacred canon, or form any part of the infallible rule of faith and practice.

In the Church of England, however, large portions of the Apocryphal books are read in her public assemblies, and appealed to as if they were canonical books. It is true, the Church, in her sixth article, declares that these books are not appealed to as any part of the rule of faith; and they are not read on Sundays. But on holy-days they are read continually.

The Episcopal Church in this country has adopted the same practice, under the same restrictions.

Presbyterians object to this practice, and refuse to adopt it, for the following reasons:—

1. Because they are persuaded that nothing ought to be read under the name of Holy Scripture, but that which is regarded as the inspired Word of God. To do this, is to depart from an important Protestant principle, and open the door for endless abuse.

2. Because those Apocryphal books, out of which the lessons referred to are taken, evidently contain some false doctrines, some mis-statements, and not a few things adapted to promote ridicule rather than edification.

3. Notwithstanding, in the sixth article of the Church of England, it is expressly stated that these Apocryphal books are not read as any part of the rule of faith, still in her Homilies they are spoken of in language of a very different aspect. Baruch is cited as the Prophet Baruch, and his writing is called the Word of the Lord to the Jews. The book of Tobit is expressly ascribed to the Holy Ghost, in the most unequivocal terms, as follows:

—" The same lesson doth the Holy Ghost also teach in sundry places of the Scriptures, saying, 'Mercifulness and alms-giving purgeth from all sins, and delivereth from death, and suffereth not the soul to come into darkness," &c. (See *Homily against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion*, part i., p. 475; and *Homily on Alms-deeds*, part ii., p. 328.) Surely, if " the Holy Ghost teacheth" what is written in this book, it is an inspired book, and ought to be considered as a part of the " rule of faith." It is worthy of notice here, that the Article and Homilies here quoted, make a part of the formularies of the Episcopal Church in the United States, as well as in that of England.

4. The practice of reading these lessons in public worship, from writings acknowledged not to be canonical, and from writings which contain much exceptionable matter, was early protested against by many of the most learned and pious dignitaries, and other divines of the Church of England, and has been, at different times, ever since, matter of regret and complaint among the most valuable members of that body; but in spite of these remonstrances and petitions, it has been maintained to the present day. This fact shows, in a strong light, the mischief of commencing an erroneous practice, and how difficult it is to get rid of any thing of this kind, when it is able to plead established custom in its support.*

* It is to be feared that, so far from discontinuing, there is a revived feeling in behalf of these heretical books. The Rev. Mr. Melville of London, hitherto reputed not only as an evangelical, but eminently evangelical minister, when restored to his people, after illness which had, for a season, laid him aside from duty, publicly recommended the reading of the Apocrypha to his flock, and complained of its books being too " much neglected,"—as if such works could be too much disowned. How pleasing must such language as this be to the Church of Rome!—*L.*

CHAPTER VI.

CONCLUSION.

Such are the considerations which satisfy Presbyterians that their doctrine, their ecclesiastical order, and their worship, are truly primitive and scriptural. We condemn not our neighbours. To their own Master they stand or fall. Our only object in what has been said, is, to "render a reason" for our own belief and practice. The names of other denominations would not have been so much as mentioned, or alluded to, in the foregoing statements, had it been possible, without doing so, to exhibit our own peculiarities, and to show wherein and why we differ from some of our sister Churches. But firmly believing that all the leading features of the Presbyterian system are more in accordance with the Word of God, and with the usage of the purest and best ages of the Christian Church, than any other, we feel bound to maintain them, to teach them to our children, and to bear testimony in their favour before the world. We deny to none, who hold fast the essentials of our holy religion, the name of Christian Churches. It is enough for us to know that we adhere to "the simplicity that is in Christ"—that we walk in the footsteps of the primitive Christians. We forbid none who profess to cast out devils, "because they follow not with us." Let them do all the good they can in their own way. We claim the same privilege; and only beg to be permitted, with the *Bible* in our hands, to ascertain "what saith the Scripture," and how apostles and martyrs glori-

fied God. We "call no man master; one is our master, even Christ." And, therefore, throughout the foregoing pages, our primary appeal has been to his *Word*, the great statute-book of his kingdom. However plausible in theory, or attractive in practice, any rite or ceremony may appear, we dare not adopt it, unless we find some warrant for it in the only infallible guide of the Church. If, then, Presbyterianism, in all its essential features, is plainly found in the Word of God; if it maintains, throughout, the great representative principle which pervades the kingdom of God; if it guards more perfectly than any other system against clerical assumption and tyranny, on the one hand, and against popular excitement and violence on the other; if it provides, in itself, for complete concert in action, without the necessity of resorting to extra voluntary associations; if it furnishes the best means for maintaining pure and energetic discipline, and bringing the whole Church, in doubtful and difficult cases, to give a calm and equitable judgment; and if it present the most effectual means of purging out error, and correcting abuses; then, surely, we have no small evidence that it is from the God of truth and order, and ought to be maintained in all the Churches.

Let it never be forgotten, however, that as Presbyterianism, in all its leading features, *was*, *undoubtedly*, *the primitive and apostolic model of the Church*; so, in order to the maintenance and execution of this system to the best advantage, *there must be a large portion of the primitive and apostolic spirit reigning in the Church.* No sooner did Christians lose the spirit of the first and purest age, than they began to depart from the simplicity of Christ's institutions. Having less spirituality to present, they thought to compensate for this defect by outward show and ceremonial. Uncommanded rites and forms were multiplied, for the purpose of attracting both Jews and Pagans into the Church. Purity of doctrine gave way to the speculations of philosophy. Purity of discipline became unpopular, and yielded to the laxity of luxuriance and fashionable life. Prelacy,

as we have seen in a former chapter, gradually crept into the Church; and with it many inventions of men, to allure and beguile those who had lost all relish for primitive simplicity.

Now, just so far as we retain the simple devoted spirit of the apostolic age, we shall love, retain, and honour Presbyterianism. Those who possess most of this spirit will be most friendly to this system. But just in proportion as that spirit declines, Presbyterian doctrines will be thought too rigid; Presbyterian worship will appear too simple and naked; and Presbyterian discipline will be regarded as too unaccommodating and austere. Let Presbyterians, then, learn a lesson of wisdom from this consideration. Let them remember that their system will never appear so well, or work so well, as in the midst of simple, primitive, and devoted piety. This is its genial soil. As long as such a soil is furnished, it will grow. When such a soil is not furnished, it will still live, and do better than any other system on the whole; but its highest glory will have departed, and something else will begin to be thought desirable by the votaries of worldly indulgence and worldly splendour. The friends of our beloved Church ought to know, and lay to heart, that their happiness and their strength consist in cordial and diligent adherence to that vital principle, the language of which is, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

I cannot better conclude the editing of this admirable little work, than by exhorting Presbyterians, from the views and arguments which have been presented, to be well assured of the validity of all the ordinances of the Presbyterian Church—to keep their minds quite at ease amid all the arrogant assumptions and uncharitable insinuations of the pretended apostolic school; and, at the

same time, to cherish no spirit of unchurching retaliation towards any of their Prelatical brethren. The Presbyterian Church has always been kind and charitable to others, sometimes almost to a fault. The Church of Scotland never denied the Christianity of the Church of England, nor the validity of her ordinances. She has, by leading men, again and again acknowledged her; and she has no disposition *now* to quarrel. In harmony with these views, the Church of Scotland contributed frequently and largely in behalf of particular congregations of Lutherans, both in this country and in America, when suffering under any calamity; and it is but the other day that not a few of her Church courts expressed their deep sympathy, and sent relief to ministers of the Established Church of Ireland, exposed to the violence of Popery.

To use the language of Dr. Miller, addressing Presbyterians, "Be not moved when the zealous advocate for the divine right of diocesan Episcopacy charges you with *schism* for living out of the communion of their Church, and denounces your ministry and ordinances as invalid. After reading the foregoing sheets, I trust you will be prepared to receive such charges and denunciaciations with the same calm, dispassionate, conscious superiority that you feel, when a partisan of the Papacy denounces you for rejecting the supremacy of the Pope, and questions the possibility of your salvation out of the Church of Rome. No, brethren, be not alarmed! There is nothing in their claims to intimidate the most tender conscience—nothing to excite a scruple in the most cautious mind. Let them exhibit, and assert, and reiterate, their exclusive pretensions, with all the confidence of zeal, and with all the heat of disputation. Let none of these things move you. You are already in the bosom of a Church, as nearly conformed to apostolic order as any upon earth. If the testimony of Scripture, if the writings of the Fathers in the earliest and purest age of the Church—if the weight of numbers, of piety, and of learning, throughout the Protestant world—be of any value, they are clearly on our side. Every succes-

sive step that I take in this inquiry, impresses on my mind a deeper conviction of the truth of my principles, and of my obligation to bless God for casting my lot in the Presbyterian Church." (*Letters*, p. 222.) Again:— "But even toward the advocates of these (Prelatical errors), guard against a spirit of acrimony or retaliation. Compassionate their error. Pray without ceasing for their illumination, and endeavour to win them by the patient exercise of a kind, respectful, and fraternal spirit. However the manifestation of such a spirit may be received by *them*, it will promote *your own* comfort and benefit both with God and man. No good effort was ever lost. No holy temper was ever exercised in vain." (*Ib.*, p. 50.)

PART II.

THE CHARACTER AND ADVANTAGES OF PRESBYTERIANISM.

BY THE REV. J. G. LORIMER.

CHAPTER I.

VIEW OF THE PRESENT STATE OF PRESBYTERIANISM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

Some Presbyterians, comparing the limited population of Scotland with the far superior numbers of England, may be apt to imagine that Presbyterianism is a very limited form of ecclesiastical polity—that Presbyterians are a small, as they often are a despised people. But no idea can be more unfounded. To advert to a few facts in this connection :—

The Church of Scotland, which is an Established Presbyterian Church, has—exclusive of preaching stations, and in some quarters double churches—1,282, or nearly 1,300 congregations, and is rapidly increasing. Above 200 additional places of worship have been projected in seven years, and 175 are built or building. She has between 200 and 300 ministers or missionaries settled in the colonies of Great Britain, and is yearly adding to the number. During the last year, there was an addition of 17. Her labours in the cause of Sabbath observance, education, the conversion of the Jews, and of the heathen, as well as special revivals in particular parishes, indicate growing progress and strength. It may be added, that intelligent attachment to her principles and constitution as a Presbyterian Church, is decidedly on the increase among her office-bearers and members. In addition to the above, there are 500 Presbyterian congregations in Scotland, not in connection with the Church—making together 1,800.

It is believed, that since recent discussions connected with doctrine in one of the bodies, there has been a revival of Presbyterian attachment. These Churches have also a considerable number of ministers and missionaries in different parts of the British dominions abroad. In the meantime, the Episcopal congregations of Scotland are about 80; and the Independents, deducting their vacancies, have little more. There are also some smaller divisions, as of Baptists, who are congregational in their views of Church government; but the whole combined constitute but a very limited number. As nearly as can be ascertained, the different branches of Presbyterians in Scotland have, during the last ten years, increased by above 270 congregations; while, in the same period, the Episcopalians have added 14 to their number—little more than one a-year, and *not one-half* the number of congregations which the Presbyterians have in the same period collected in England; the Independents, 23; and the Roman Catholics, 19. This indicates the decided and growing Presbyterianism of Scotland with the increase of her people, and the vanity of any attempt to thrust an opposite form of ecclesiastical government and worship on her national acceptance.

The above was written five years ago. Since then, as all intelligent men know, a vast ecclesiastical change has come over Scotland. Dissenting bodies may remain substantially the same, Prelatical Episcopacy has, perhaps, among them, made the largest progress; but an entire Church has separated from the National Establishment, or rather the old Church of Scotland has withdrawn from the State, leaving another body in possession of the civil emoluments;—I, of course, refer to the Free Church of Scotland, but shall not here enter further into its state or character than to record that in less than four years it numbers 672 ministers, 710 congregations, 110 stations, waiting for pastors; that, besides, it possesses a College in Edinburgh, where philosophy and theology are taught by seven professors of the highest reputation, and that the students of

theology proper numbered last year nearly 200—a greater number, it is believed, than was to be found, at the same time, in the four national universities of Scotland; that all the missionary undertakings of the Church continue in full force—nay, are largely extended since the Disruption, the entire body of missionaries having cast in their lot with the Free Church; and that the whole sum raised by the adherents of the Free Church, during the three years, for their various objects, home and foreign, amount to the astonishing sum of £1,149,000.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to state what is the precise proportion, in point of numbers, between the Establishment and the Free Church, nor is it necessary to the objects of this chapter. With the exception of from 70 to 100 places of worship which, during the pendency of a suit, remain in the hands of the Free Church, the whole external material of the Establishment at home remains as before; but this would prove a very delusive index of numbers or strength. Judging from the facts, that in all the towns of Scotland, with few exceptions, the great mass of those who formerly belonged to the Establishment now belong to the Free Church, at least of those who showed any interest in religion; that this is true universally of the Highlands and Islands; that even the rural parishes of the south are much divided between the two Churches; and that there is not, perhaps, a single district of Scotland of which it could be said that the people are *warmly attached* to the Establishment;—considering, also, the small comparative collections for missionary objects at home or abroad (though relatively a far larger proportion of the wealthier class belong to the Establishment than to the Free Church), and how large a share of these is devoted to the upholding of chapels which formerly supported themselves, and could point to flourishing congregations, while not a few places of worship have been entirely shut up: taking all these things into account, it cannot be questioned that the Establishment retains but a small proportion of the people of Scotland, and that its reduced numbers would be still more

apparent if jealousy of the progress of the Free Church in some quarters had not induced those who were not long ago sworn foes of the Establishment, now to show it favour—not, it is apprehended, from love to it, but unprovoked dislike to a formidable rival. In regard to the Colonies, a decided majority of the ministers and the overwhelming majority of the Scottish people have sided with the Free Church. In Canada a Free Presbyterian College has been set up, which in this, its second year, numbers 40 young men looking forward to the colonial ministry—a number several times greater than was enjoyed by the College of the Establishment in its greatest prosperity, previous to the Disruption.

As the Free Church of Scotland is thoroughly Presbyterian in organization and spirit, more so than when connected with the State; as it is able freely to develop all the resources of that divine form of government, without hindrance or restraint; and as, in spite of all hostility, secret and open, its public reputation is high and its energy undoubted; so there can be little question that its progress has imparted a powerful impulse to Presbyterian principles in Scotland, and even propagated them in other lands. But we must return to the object more immediately in hand.

Crossing the Irish Channel, we find the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND. It has more than 500 congregations. During the last twelve years, it has increased by 120, and is rising from year to year, by 10 congregations. Already it divides the Protestant population of Ireland, and is reviving not only in numbers, but in purity, and educational zeal, and missionary spirit. It is also rising in attachment to the Presbyterian system. According to still more recent information (1847), from an intelligent minister of the body, it appears that the ministers now number 495, having increased 65 within the last five years; that there are 83 licentiates, in addition, preaching the gospel; and not less than 230 young men educating for the Christian ministry. Through the bequest of a minister's widow (amounting to £20,000), the Church is about to found a regular Presbyterian

college for the training of her young men. The Government have, meanwhile, made an arrangement by which *they* endow 8 or 10 professors, to be solely and entirely under the jurisdiction of the Church, without any control from the Government. Greater efforts than any which had heretofore been made are in progress towards the evangelization of the Roman Catholic population. During the last five years a fund, named the Bicentenary Fund, has been raised by the Presbyterian Church, amounting to £16,000, for the service of the gospel in the south and west of Ireland. In the same period nearly 100 additional schools have been opened for teaching the people to read, in their native language, the Word of God; while, within the last year, 10 missionaries have been set apart for the same work.

Turning to ENGLAND—the very head-quarters of Prelacy—we find the Presbyterian Church reviving. Owing to not acting on an organized system, and other causes, the ancient Presbyterians of England, who once constituted a half of the English Church, had sunk into Congregationalism, yea, heresy. But Presbytery, and that in strict organization, is making decided progress. It now numbers, in its different branches, above 160 congregations, many of them the growth of the last ten years. It is understood, also, that there is an increasing conviction among pious and intelligent men in the south, both in the Establishment and among the Congregationalists and Methodists, that an adoption of some of the leading principles of Presbytery is essential to meet the defects of their own systems of ecclesiastical government.

The great event of the Disruption of the Scottish Establishment has exerted a powerful influence on the Presbyterian Church in England. In addition to the above information, I have now to state (1847) that the Church no longer claims the character of being a mere branch of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland located in England; that, on the contrary, it has assumed a distinct footing as well as name. According to the roll of its ministry in 1845, it numbered 110

ministers. Twenty-two of its congregations have been formed within these few years, entirely new. In addition, there are seven congregations which separated from places of worship held by the Scottish Establishment, and have built places of worship for themselves. A college has been instituted in the metropolis, under able professors, attended by between twenty and thirty young men, looking forward to the ministry. In short, there is reason to believe that the prospects of Presbytery in England are more favourable than they have been for generations. Owing to the wonderful providence of God in connection with the residence of groups of Scottish and Irish Presbyterians in all the larger towns of England, the elements of Presbyterian congregations are now almost everywhere to be met with.

In addition to those above described, the Calvinistic Methodists may be enumerated. They prevail in Wales, numbering, according to the most recent information, 750 places of worship, 122 stated, 298 occasional preachers, besides 1,772 elders and deacons. They are of sufficient importance to have a theological institution for the due training of their young men for the office of the ministry. In 1844, the communicants amounted to nearly 60,000.

If, from the British Isles, we pass to Holland, the asylum of the suffering in days of persecution, we behold an Established Presbyterian Church, with 1,450 ministers, and a Presbyterian population of 1,500,000. Of these, 500,000 are communicants. The places of worship are multiplied according to the increase of the population. While there is a growth in numbers, what is far better, there is a growth in evangelical piety. The hatred of Popery, and the missionary spirit which have appeared in fresh vigour of late years, indicate favourable progress.

France could once boast of a Presbyterian Church of 2,000 congregations. It is well known to what protracted and merciless persecution she was subjected—a persecution which slew the servants of God by tens of thousands, and drove more than a million to foreign

shores—in not a few cases, to plant Presbyterian Churches in the American wilderness. Never was a Church more fearfully oppressed. This Church of many martyrs still survives, having 400 congregations belonging to the Reformed as distinguished from the Lutherans, who have about 200—together, the charge of nearly 2,000,000 of professed Protestants. There is a rapid and extensive revival, in numbers and spirit, conspicuous throughout France.

In SWITZERLAND the Established Church is also Presbyterian. The population of the country amounts to above 2,000,000, and the great mass of the people belong to the National Church. Its ministers are estimated at from 800 to 1,000. It is well-known that a remarkable revival of true religion has appeared of recent years in many of the Protestant cantons. Along with this has arisen a growing attachment to the ancient constitution and discipline of the Church. "The History of the Reformation," by D'Aubigné, a work which seems destined to give an impulse to the cause of religion, not only in Switzerland, but throughout the world, is the work of a Presbyterian minister in Geneva.

Though the Swiss Church must be classed with Presbyterianism, as nearer to it than to either of the opposite forms of government, yet it will be remembered that its Presbyterian organization, like that of most of the Protestant Churches of the Continent, is very imperfect, and that much of the moral and religious evil under which the Churches labour is attributable to this defect. In judging of the character of Presbytery by the character of countries, it is necessary to bear this in mind, else that form of government may be charged with defects and positive evils which do not belong to it—but which are the consequences of its absence. The Church of the Canton de Vaud has all along been Presbyterian; but it was not till the noble Disruption of 1845, and the erection of the Free Church there, that ruling elders, an essential part of the Presbyterian constitution, were elected and called

to the exercise of their important functions. As in Scotland so in Switzerland, the Disruption has given a fresh impulse to Presbytery, in its real nature, and not its mere name.

The remains of the long persecuted WALDENSES, like their fathers, are Presbyterians. They have 13 pastors among 22,000 people, and are rising in their religious character and zeal. With them the office of ruling elder is in exercise.

Nay, a Protestant and Presbyterian Church, including, of Reformed and Lutheran, 1,900 ministers, is to be found in HUNGARY among a population of nearly 2,000,000. Here, as in most Prelatic Churches, there is a loud call for the Spirit of revival; but there is the organization of Presbyterianism and faint symptoms of life.

In GERMANY it is difficult to ascertain the proportion of the Protestant population which may be accounted Reformed, as distinguished from Lutheran; but both Churches may fairly be reckoned in this enumeration as Presbyterian, inasmuch as the Lutherans do not hold the doctrine of "apostolic Episcopal succession," and have superintendents *only* from human expediency. The great Reformer, whose name they bear, maintained from Scripture that presbyter and bishop are identical, and that all pastors are equal in office. This is the grand point of distinction between Presbytery and Episcopacy. The body, too, which, according to recent arrangements, manages the affairs of the Evangelical Church of Prussia (the most important of the German Protestants), is an ecclesiastical Synod or General Assembly. The revival of evangelical religion in this country, of late years, has been conspicuous. One-third part of the ministry in Berlin, the Prussian capital, is evangelical; and there are few of the many Protestant universities of Germany, where several of the professors are not men of the same sentiment and character. The new evangelical seceders from Rome, under Mr. Czerski, have adopted the Presbyterian form of government, and though bribed to receive Prelacy, have nobly declined.

With regard to the northern kingdoms of NORWAY, DENMARK, and SWEDEN, though not claiming any unbroken Prelatic succession, on the contrary, holding only Presbyterian ordination, they may perhaps be reckoned as, *de facto*, Episcopalian in ecclesiastical constitution. They are governed by bishops and archbishops. Though among them there is evangelical progress, it is slight; the reign of cold formalism—where there is not heresy—it is understood, is still wide-spread and desolating.

Crossing to the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, we find Presbyterianism in great strength. The States were originally peopled to a large extent by emigrants from England, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, France, and Germany. The greatest number were Presbyterian. Twenty thousand Presbyterian Puritans emigrated from England alone in a few years of the seventeenth century. We need not wonder, therefore, to learn that the different religious bodies which may be classed under the head of Presbyterian, form, according to the most recent statistics, 5,344 ministers to 7,146 churches. These constitute a large proportion of the whole ministry and congregations of the United States. As a proof of progress, it may be mentioned that in 1789, when the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church was *first* regularly organized (having subsisted under the form of a synod before), there were only 177 ministers among 419 congregations. In 1839, being fifty years, the year of jubilee, there were in the same body 2,225 ministers, and 2,807 congregations; in other words, in fifty years it had multiplied by *eleven times*.

Of late years the progress has, if possible, been still more remarkable. A question of doctrine which would not have divided many Churches—which, in point of fact, does not (though the difference exists) lead Prelatists or Congregationalists to separate into distinct Churches, was followed, and we humbly think rightly followed, by separation in the Presbyterian Church of America. Such is the homage which Presbytery feels herself bound to pay to divine truth, in its less obvious

forms. The separation took place in 1838; and what were its effects? Did it scatter the Church into weakness and decay? So far from it, that by 1843 both divisions had immensely increased, so as to hold out the prospect in a few years of each reaching the strength which both enjoyed previous to the separation. At present there cannot be fewer than 3,000 ordained ministers, 4,000 churches, and 800 licentiates and candidates for the ministry, in these two divisions of Presbytery. The progress is particularly marked in the last item, giving promise of rapid enlargement in the future. Such, with the divine blessing, is the expansive power of Presbytery. Of course, the entire bodies holding Presbyterian principles make an immense addition to these large numbers. With the exception of the Presbyterian Church proper, I am not aware that, on the American field, Churches under other forms of government can point to the same rapidity of progress.

The Methodists and Moravians, constituting honoured and useful Churches, both in Europe and in the New World, do not seem to admit of being precisely classed under any of the great divisions of ecclesiastical government. Some points they hold in common with Presbyterians, others with the opponents of Presbytery; but it is well known that both disallow the exclusive claims of Prelacy, and boast only of Presbyterian ordination.

From the rapid sketch which has been given, it is obvious that Presbyterians are not—as some are apt to imagine—a small isolated party; that, on the contrary, they are great in numbers, and in the general intelligence, morality, and religion of the countries which they occupy. They are vastly more numerous than Episcopalian Protestants, or the Congregationalists of the Old and New Worlds combined. Moreover, it appears that they are not withering into decay before the formidable pretensions of modern Episcopacy to an exclusive apostolic origin; but are growing rapidly, perhaps more rapidly than many, in numbers, and, with the revival of evangelical zeal and liberality, are growing also in

warm attachment to the principles, constitution, and forms of the Presbyterian Church. There is, then, this consolation for Presbyterians, that if they are in error, they are in error with more than half of Protestant Christendom, and with nations of highest reputation in the world. This should save them from the contempt with which they are often spoken of by parties who, comparatively speaking, can boast of a mere handful, and these without any superiority in mind, morals, or religion to their neighbours. We may safely say, that there is no chance of Presbyterians or their principles dying out.

The above numbers, and any others which may yet be adduced, are given on the authority of the most recent and accredited documents to which I have had access—generally those of the religious bodies themselves. I am persuaded that any inaccuracy is immaterial. On such questions a close approximation to the truth is all that can be looked for.

CHAPTER II.

PRESBYTERIANISM FAVOURABLE TO THE MAINTENANCE OF SOUND DOCTRINE.

There is nothing more important than sound doctrine. It is another name for the revealed truth of God, and is essential to salvation. Whatever, then, is fitted to protect and maintain its purity, is most important. This is one of the great uses of Church government, order, and discipline. Now, we hold that Presbytery, as proved by history, is more favourable than other ecclesiastical systems to this grand end. By sound doctrine I understand what is popularly called Calvinistic Evangelical Theology—the system of truths embodied in all the Confessions of Faith of the Churches of the Reformation. It is not contended that any form of Church government, whether Presbyterian, Prelatic, or Congregational, is able infallibly to keep a Church, from generation to generation, in the unbroken possession of pure doctrine—a stranger to error, whether among office-bearers or members. No. As if to show forth the depravity of man, and the necessity of the perpetual teaching of the Holy Spirit, to uphold the truths which the Scriptures reveal, God has allowed degeneracy and heresy to appear in Churches under all forms of ecclesiastical constitution. No one has any ground for boasting over a brother in another communion; on the contrary, all have ground for humiliation in regard to the Church of which they are members. But, with these abatements, some kinds of Church

polity are better fitted to maintain the purity of truth than others—to exclude the erroneous, and to spread revival after decay. I hold that Presbytery, fully organized, and in active operation, enjoys these advantages over its rivals.

It is important to remember, that there is no tenet or practice of Presbyterianism which is calculated to pervert sound doctrine. Prelacy, by extravagantly magnifying the exclusive power of the bishop in ordination, is apt to disparage the peculiar truths of the Gospel; in short, it is fitted to put things out of their proper place. An order of men raised above their brethren, though these brethren be as well educated as they—invested, moreover, with great power, and generally wealth—naturally come to attach undue importance to their services, and to claim for them a mysterious apostolic charm. This immediately affects, in the eye of multitudes, the relative importance of what are called the doctrines of evangelical religion. Under Prelacy, then, there is an open door into defection, and thence to error, which is its near neighbour. Witness the superstition and self-righteousness associated with the highest notions of Prelacy proclaimed in the history of the Church of Rome, and in the sentiments of not a few of the new school of the Church of England.

On the other hand, in the perpetual tendency to division and subdivision under Independency, which admits of no courts of review and final determination, there is a serious bias to error. Divisions and heresies are generally associated together; and for this reason, that when men separate, they feel constrained to state some plausible ground for it; and, as this is often difficult, they create grounds. This cannot be done without forcing into error. Hence the many errors which appeared among the English Sectaries or Independents in the seventeenth century, and among various branches of Baptists in the United States at the present day, which are Congregational in their form of Church polity. Presbytery is happily free from both dangers. Supposing a Presbyterian Church to receive the truth

at first, and to have fixed standards, as all such Churches have (while many Congregationalists have them not), there is no doctrine which she holds, that, by swelling out of its proper proportion, is fitted to subvert the great doctrines of evangelical religion; and, on the other hand, there are such protection against division, and power to exclude unsound doctrine in its very first manifestations, that she is safe against evils to which other Churches are exposed.

These views are supported by facts. While Prelacy in the Church of Rome sowed the seeds of so many serious errors, the witnessing Waldensian Church, which was and is Presbyterian, maintained for ages sound Calvinistic doctrine before the Reformer bearing the name was born. The Church of Scotland, also, another Presbyterian Church, in the middle of the seventeenth century, was enabled to maintain sound doctrine in her borders against great dangers. When England was overspread with the errors of the Sectaries, comparatively speaking, these errors were unknown in Scotland. This is testified by history. Fergusson of Kilwinning, an eminent minister, writing in 1652, says: "So long as Presbyterian government stood in its integrity, we might, in the Lord's strength, have defied the devil to have brought error into Scotland." Speaking of a matter of fact well known to him, living at the time, he says: "In the Church of England, Presbytery could not be set up; Independency was pleaded for and practised; and what has come of it? Satan has vomited out a flood of errors; that there were never more, nor these more gross, in any time of the Christian world. Yea, all the rotten graves of old heresy are digged up, and now avowed—Socinianism, in denying Christ's righteousness in the matter of justification—Anabaptism, in denying the baptism of infants—Arianism, in denying the Trinity—and many other such like; yea, there are some errors that were never heard of before—some affirming that there is no Church that they can join with, and therefore they turn Seekers—some are above all preaching, prayer, and ordinances; and all these are the

fruits of Independency. Again, look on the fruits of the Presbyterian government in Scotland, where it has been in vigour: God has made it a hammer for the battering down of the beginnings of error, *so that these twelve years by-past, not any one error has come to any strength;* and this, all under God, from Presbyterian government being his institution." (*Refutation*, p. 59, &c.) We have, to the same purpose, a striking testimony from Principal Baillie, who lived at the period of which he writes. The facts to which he appeals are clear and comprehensive in their bearing:—

"By this kind of government (Presbyterian), other Reformed Churches have, with ease, kept themselves pure and clean of all heresies and schisms; not only Scotland, Switzerland, and divers parts of Germany, but France itself—which, to this day, was never blessed with any assistance of the secular arm—by this spiritual and divine adminicle alone, have kept themselves safe from the irruption of all erroneous spirits. I confess that Holland has been a cage to these unclean birds; but the reason is evident. Her civil state there, walking in the corrupt principles of carnal policy, which cannot be blessed with final success, impedes the exercise of Church discipline in its most principal parts. *These last forty years the land has not been permitted to enjoy more General Assemblies* than one; and how great service that one did towards the purging of the much corrupted Church, and calming the greatly disturbed state, all their friends in Europe see and congratulate, while their foes did grieve and envy. It is not prophecy, but a rational prediction, bottomed on reasons and multiplied experience—let England once be countenanced by her superior powers, to enjoy the just and necessary liberty of consistories (kirk-sessions) for congregations, and presbyteries for counties, synods for larger shires, and national assemblies for the whole land, as Scotland has long possessed, by the unanimous consent of king and parliament, without the least prejudice to the civil state, but to the evident and confessed benefit thereof; or as the first Protestants in France, by the concession

of a Popish state and king, have enjoyed all these, as spiritual courts, the last eighty years and above;—put these holy and divine institutions in the hands of the Church of England, by the blessing of God thereupon, the sore and great evil of so many heresies and schisms shall quickly be cured, which now not only troubles the peace and welfare, but hazards the very existence, of Church and kingdom. Without this mean, the state will weary itself in vain about the cure of such spiritual diseases." (*Dissuasive*, p. 8.)

Coming down to a later day, I might appeal to the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, as warranting the same conclusions. Holding by the Westminster Confession of Faith, it has, from its foundation down to the present time, maintained, with slight exceptions, an honourable reputation for orthodoxy. Any insidious admixture of error is of recent manifestation, and originated in too liberal a ministerial communion with Congregationalists, who did not subscribe the same standards. It is apparent from "*Mather's Magnalia*," &c., that those of the Puritans who had gone out as Congregationalists to New England, became, in the working of their Church government, more and more Presbyterian. A leading and essential part of Presbytery which they adopted, was the court of authoritative review; and the happy fruit of this is apparent in the fact, that, in the State of Connecticut, the first symptoms of Socinianism were checked. Hence there is only one Socinian congregation in that large State—a striking contrast to the adjoining State of Massachusetts, where, among the Congregationalists, Church courts, reproached by Socinians, were allowed to go into disuse. The consequence is, that *there* there are considerably more than 100 Socinian places of worship. This interesting and instructive fact is given on the authority of the grandson of Jonathan Edwards, by Dr. Lang, in his *Religion of America*, p. 61.

And this leads to the explanation of an objection. If Presbyterianism be such a safeguard to doctrine, why,

it may be asked, have so many Presbyterian Churches become heretical? My answer is, that, in proportion, there have not been so many of them, or for so long a period, unsound, as other Churches; and where they have become unsound, it has been in a great measure owing to a previous relaxation, if not abandonment, of Presbyterian Church government. The Confession of Faith of Presbyterian Churches, it will be admitted, contains a fuller and stronger exposition of doctrine than that of Congregational or Prelatical Churches, at least in this country and in America. This is a favourable sign; and if we recall the actual character of Churches as unsound, surely Prelacy has no ground of boasting over Presbytery. How unsound the Church of Rome, if, indeed, she deserves the name of a Church! How unsound the Episcopal Churches of Denmark, Sweden, Norway—how much have all been benumbed by Neology! How unsound is the Church of England, in her different divisions, at the present day—withering under the consuming power of semi-Popery! How unsound is the Episcopal Church of America, nearly equally divided by the same heresy! Nor has Congregationalism any reason to triumph. Wherever avowed Socinianism appears, whether in Britain or America, it is almost wholly in the Congregational form. It may not, at the present moment, be very extensive in Britain; but it has been in other days. Considerable bodies of Baptists, too, in the United States, are more or less under its influence, and that of kindred errors. On the other hand, it is only in some parts of the Continent that Presbyterianism is seen in union with very serious heresy; and that heresy is on the decline. Though still, unhappily, powerful, it is, moreover, where true Presbytery is least understood.

This brings me to notice, that it was the relaxation of Presbyterian Church government among Presbyterians which chiefly led to the heresies which have at any time invaded their borders. Socinianism has sadly infected the Presbyterian Church of Geneva; but it was not till the subscription to an orthodox standard—one of the

indispensable parts of Presbyterian polity—was abandoned. The same fatal error infected the Church of France; but it was not till relentless persecution had, in a great measure, broken up the Church government, and prevented the meetings of courts of review, which might have checked the heresy—and, indeed, till the whole Church was laid waste, and its most valuable members slain or driven into exile. Socinianism infected the congregations of the Presbyterian Puritans of England; but it was not till they had dropped any Presbyterial organization which they possessed, and had become Congregationalists, and therefore without power to depose a heretical brother, or to cut off a heretical congregation. So, when unsound doctrine prevailed in the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, low and relaxed views of Church government also prevailed.

The same remark applies to the Church of Scotland. The period in her history when she was most unsound, was from the middle to the end of last century. And when were the spirit and practice of Presbyterianism more in abeyance? Practically, and especially so far as doctrine was concerned, a great body of the ministers had become Independents. They had neither kirk-sessions nor presbyterial visitations.

In harmony with these views of the superior advantages of Presbytery as a protection against heresy, it may be added, that, where sound doctrine revives, it revives more rapidly in a Prysbyterian than in a Prelatical or Congregational Church. The reason is obvious. There is a much more natural and easy communication of favourable influence in the one case than in the other. No new or artificial means need to be got up for the revival. Presbytery already supplies a full organization; good men necessarily meet in Church courts, and encourage each other. Hence, under God's Spirit, the rapidity and extent of Presbyterian revivals. Witness the improvement in the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, Ireland, the United States, France, Switzerland, and even Germany. Where a decided majority has not been already attained, there is a rapid tending

towards it. Compare this with the Church of England, whose evangelical ministers are, with all their progress, still very inconsiderable in number, and now in danger of being thrown back by the new heresy, or, rather, the old apostasy revived. Compare it also with the Congregational Churches of Britain and America, which, where not declining, do not, either in the past or the present, indicate, for the most part, the same rapid revival. Hence it appears, alike from the very constitution of the Presbyterian Church and the facts of history, that there are, proportionally, fewer temptations to unsound doctrine, greater facilities for checking it when it arises, a more speedy revival out of it where it has prevailed, in the Presbyterian than in the Prelatic or Congregational Churches; and is not this an important argument in behalf of Presbytery, and no indistinct intimation that it is from God?

The experience of the last few years, since the above was first published, amply confirms the views embodied. Popish, in other words, false doctrine, has been spreading with fearful rapidity, in the Prelatic Churches of England and America in the meantime; but there has been no checking of the evil in the way of discipline—or, at least, no checking which deserves the name, indeed, scarcely any attempt at it. The greatest relief to the Church of England has proceeded from the *spontaneous* withdrawal of many of her ministers and members into the Church of Rome. Is this the proper position of a Church of Christ—to trust to the common honesty of the heretic? Where the need for the appointment of the ordinance of discipline at all, if this be sufficient? Is it not to be feared, too, in such cases, that while a quicker conscience leads some to withdraw, a much larger body who have less courage, or less moral sensibility, will remain behind?

With regard, again, to Congregationalism, it is not unknown that some leading men of the body in England are infected, to say the least, with the semi-Pelagian heresy. No discipline has been exercised

upon them—no public testimony lifted up against their errors. Is it said that, from the constitution of Independency, no discipline *can* be employed? Then, this is admitting the inadequacy of such a form of government to protect against error, the very point for which we contend. But, to the honour of Scotch Independency, there has recently been a decided condemnation of the heresy in question. To what is the difference between Scotland and England, in this respect, owing? Is it any disparagement of orthodox Scottish Congregationalism to say that it is the better of the near neighbourhood of Presbytery? The Free Church has had one case of this kind before her courts, which she decided by deposition. The United Secession has had several, which she has settled by separation from her pale. It is matter of joy that Independents, even at the expense of their denominational consistency, pursue a similar course; but all this serves to establish the truth of the title of this chapter.

CHAPTER III.

PRESBYTERIANISM FAVOURABLE TO UNITY AND PEACE.

Next to sound doctrine, there is nothing more important to a Church than union and peace in itself, and with other Churches. These are right in themselves—a source of strength to the Church of Christ—a great recommendation of religion to the world—and a mean of advancing its progress. Now, the Presbyterian form of Church government and worship eminently conduces to these ends. This was to be expected. If it be the friend of sound doctrine, it must also be of the peace which is based on it. There is nothing inconsistent with unity in Presbytery. It holds no doctrine which excludes evangelical Christians from its pale, and so turns the Church into a schismatic—a maker of schisms. It admits of easy expansion; and there is nothing in its organization to stir up dispeace within itself: it binds all the members closely together. This is one of the grand charms of Presbytery. It presents a vivid idea of the united Church of Christ. The humblest member, who feels in any religious matter aggrieved, or who has a good suggestion to bring forward, has the power, by appeal or petition, to have his case or suggestion submitted to the whole Church, through its representative courts, and to obtain the interest and sympathy, it may be judgment, of the entire Christian body with which he is connected. In Presbytery all the parts are mutually dependent. No

one can say, "I have no need of thee." There is a beautiful gradation of courts. Every one who is a member of the Church may justly feel that he is not isolated—that through his representatives, he is connected with the whole. By bringing the ministers and elders frequently together, too, in ecclesiastical courts, upon a footing of perfect equality, not only are dividing jealousies prevented, but a spirit of love and co-operation is fostered, and the whole bears the aspect of a large and well-regulated family. Accordingly, such have been the tendency and the working of Presbytery wherever it has been fully organized, and no accidental disturbing influences have been present. Some, indeed, judging of Presbytery solely by warm discussions, which occasionally take place in Church courts, are ready to imagine that it must be injurious to peace even where it does not break up unity. But it is well to remember, that, in an ordinary state of things, it is but a small part of the business of Church courts which can occasion any serious difference of opinion—that the great mass of business connected with the government and order of the Church is conducted with such harmony, and so much as a matter of routine, that it never can meet the public eye in the form of discussion. It is well, also, to bear in mind, that a discussion, it may be a warm one, where great principles are involved, is not an unmitigated evil; that it tends to enlighten the mind of the Church, and to guide it aright; while it is almost inseparable from the advantages of free discussion, whether in Church or State. Moreover, it should be remembered that there may be, yea, there certainly is, as much division of opinion among office-bearers in the Church, under Prelatical or Congregational rule, as in Presbyterian courts. The only difference is, that the public organized courts of the one afford facilities for division of opinion being known, which do not hold in the other cases. Facts, however, which occasionally transpire, clearly show that there may be, and often is, as real discord between a prelate and his clergy, and among the members of Congregational Churches, as can

with any truth be alleged to obtain among the ministers and elders of the Presbyterian Church assembled in her public courts. Presbyterian Churches can point to as many years of unbroken quiet and steady enlargement as any other Christian body.

I may here refer to a few testimonies regarding the Church of Scotland. The *Corpus Confess. Fidei*, p. 6., thus speaks:—"It is the rare privilege of the Church of Scotland, in which respect her name is famous even among strangers, that, for the space of fifty-four years without schism, not to speak of heresy, she has held fast unity with purity of doctrine. The greatest aid to this unity, through the mercy of God, was, that with the doctrine of Christ, the apostolic discipline, as prescribed in the Word of God, was gradually received, and the whole government of the Church was arranged as nearly as possible according to this discipline. By this means all the seeds of schism and error, as soon as they began to bud or show themselves, were smothered and rooted out."

Writing of the Church of Scotland under the Commonwealth, Kirkton, a most interesting contemporary historian, says of the period when the greatest division which, perhaps, ever appeared in the Church, under the influence of evangelical and Presbyterian principles prevailed:—"The division of the Church betwixt Protesters and Resolutionists continued for six or seven years with far more heat than became them, and errors in some places infected *some few;* yet were all these losses inconsiderable in regard to the great success the Word preached had in sanctifying the nation; and I verily believe there were more souls converted to Christ in that short period of time, than in any period since the Reformation, though of triple the duration. Nor was there ever greater plenty and *purity* of the means of grace than was in their time." (P. 55.) Again, writing more comprehensively, he says of the Church as a whole:—"Lastly, the unity of the Church of Scotland was unparalleled; for whereas all other Churches were troubled with division and error, there

was never in Scotland one minister censured for error, save only Mr. John Hepburn (who held that the soul slept till the resurrection of the body); nor ever any schism in the Church of Scotland, except concerning the introduction of bishops; for all the time the true government of the Church stood in it." (*Secret History*, p. 28.)

But, more than this, it is plain from the nature of the case, as well as history, that neither Congregationalism nor Prelacy are, *in principle*, favourable to Church unity and peace. The unfavourable tendency may be controlled by peculiar or adventitious causes, but the tendency itself is adverse. Congregationalism gives all the members, young and old, male and female, equal power to speak, and vote, and determine, the questions which may be brought before the Church. Is this friendly to unity? Let the endless divisions and subdivisions of small parties among the Independents and Baptists, created by separations, decide. The divisions among the English Independents in the time of the Commonwealth, and the numerous sects, particularly among the Baptists at the present day, testify to the same unhappy tendency.*

* Were it necessary, it would be easy to quote many striking facts illustrative of the endless divisions of the sectaries during the Commonwealth. No wonder that the Presbyterians generally were opposed to toleration, when it involved a license of so many blasphemies and immoralities, under the name of religion. Edwards, in his "Gangrena," and Prynn in his pamphlets, preserve a singular catalogue. Bishop Hall complained that 180 new, many of them dangerous and blasphemous, opinions were broached and defended in England; and that, in London and its suburbs alone, there were eighty congregations of sectaries, preached to by cobblers, tailors, feltmakers, grooms, &c. Speaking of the sectaries generally, he says: "One allows community of wives—another, divorce on slight occasions; one is a Hunter—another a Seeker—another a Shaker; one disparages Scripture—another denies the immortality of the soul—a third, the resurrection of the body; one spits on the doctrine of the Trinity—and the other denies Christ's divinity; one gave himself out for God—another, Christ—and another, the Virgin Mary; and others taught, the more sin the more grace." (*Jones' Life and Times of Hall*, p. 322.)

It is to the honour of Scotland, and the superior intelligence which her Presbyterian Church secured, that the early sectaries, within her borders, were few and free from extravagance as compared with England; and they seem soon to have disappeared, at

Then, supposing individual congregations were in no danger of division from within, still there is no union among the different Churches. They are truly independent of each other. Officially they know nothing of each other's state, and can minister no counsel or relief. The grievous inconveniences and evils of this state of things have led, especially of late years, to provincial associations, and still larger unions, among persons holding Congregational views; but so far as they have done so, and that successfully, so far must they be held as departing from the strict principles of Independency, and as availing themselves, without acknowledgment, of the advantages of Presbyterian Church government. Of course, it is contended in such cases, that the unions referred to are merely optional and *advisory*, not *authoritative;* but, at least, the expedient shows the felt disadvantages of the Congregational system; and though there may be no promise of compliance where men seek advice, it is generally with the intention of following what is suggested. Apart from this, to continue asking advice is unreasonable.

With regard, again, to Prelacy, in connection with union and peace, it is well known that these are often pleaded as its great recommendations. No idea, however, can be more unfounded. The extravagant fictions as to apostolic succession, and kindred points, would prevent the Church of Rome, even were she otherwise disposed, from recognising the Christianity of Protestant Churches, and holding communion with them, supposing them to be willing to recognise and hold fellowship with her. The same schismatical views, entertained by so large, and, it is to be feared, growing number in the Episcopal Churches of England and America, destroy every thing like a well-founded claim to union on the

least they made no progress from the days of the Commonwealth. Modern Congregational views, which, it is to be remembered, involve no extravagance of sentiment or practice, are of very recent date in Scotland—within the memory of many of the existing generation. This is an indirect testimony to Presbyterian government.

part of these Churches; so far from being friends of union, as is alleged, they are its greatest enemies. If their principles be fairly carried out, not only will they prevent any union with Churches which disown the pretended apostolic succession, but they will go to expel the Evangelical party from their own communion, because they do not hold them. Nothing can be more disquieting and disuniting than the Prelatic notions of apostolic succession. Apart from every thing else, this may well condemn them. They would keep good men in perpetual anxiety as to the validity of their ministerial title. When it is demonstrable that a *single* break or false link in the chain would, in the course of two hundred years, involve the entire ministry of such a body as the Church of England in infirmity and illegality, who but the most credulous could feel secure? And as the Reformers had no bishop, and could not transmit what they did not receive, where would be the title or stability of any Church of the Reformation? Are the men or the Church which advocate such notions on the side of peace and unity, whether for themselves or others? More than this, even though there were no exclusive apostolic claims, still, the very constitution of Prelacy tends to division. The granting to one man, not better educated, more learned or wise than his brethren, such immense power as Prelacy implies, must, as human nature is constituted, create jealousies and envies which tend to separation, while the pride and ambition which great, and, it may be, suddenly acquired power begets, tend to the same result. They lead to the harsh treatment of others, or such views of self-importance as induce men to tamper with received doctrines and institutions, for the sake of obtaining a name for themselves. This conducts to new errors or superstitions, which, in their turn, produce sects and parties in the Church. These views are strongly confirmed by the facts of history. Many have imagined that Prelacy is well fitted to prevent schism, and that this, indeed, was the origin of the office of diocesan bishop when first instituted. That

this was alleged may be true; but very different was the real source of the office. The desire of pre-eminence of the ministers of large town congregations over rural brethren who laboured in smaller spheres dependent on the greater, is much nearer the truth (vide *Dr. Owen's Inquiry*, passim, pp. 25–27); and then, so far from keeping out schism, the bishops, when they were introduced, were the very parties who originated most of the heresies and errors which created serious and lasting divisions. As is justly remarked by Owen, the first attempt to corrupt and to divide a Church from within, was in the Church of Jerusalem, by Thebulis, because Simon Cleopas was chosen bishop and he was refused. (*Euseb.*, lib. iv., ch. 21.) Here was the work of a bishop! So of other and more important cases. Victor of Rome, and Polycrates of Ephesus, were the authors of the great schism about the celebration of Easter. Stephen of Rome, and Cyprian of Carthage, of the schism regarding the rebaptizing of the lapsed. Paulus, bishop of Samosata, originated the Samosatæan heresy. Donatus, that of the Donatists, because Sicilianus was preferred to him; Macedonius of Constantinople, that of the heresy which bears his name. So of Nestorius of the same city, the Nestorian heresy; Arius, of the heresy which spread so widely; and many others too tedious to name. And these were not trifling errors; not a few of them were most serious, subverting the very foundations of revealed religion. As Sutlivius testifies and proves, "all the blackest schisms and most pestilent heresies had bishops for their authors." (*Jameson's Querela*, p. 19.) They were either authors or abettors. In many cases, had it not been for them, the errors must have perished. Of what schisms and heresies has not the Pope of Rome been the originator in successive ages, and yet he is the leading prelate, without whose aid the modern Anglican school cannot make out their Christian genealogy! Descending from earlier times, I might refer to the period stretching between A.D. 815 and 1072—a period of one hundred and fifty years, when such were the contests and the heresies in the Prela-

tical Church, that it was necessary to call 260 councils to endeavour to settle controversies, and obtain peace! At the same time, the official life of a pope did not exceed between two and three years! Do these things look like union and peace? And yet Prelacy was at its height.

Coming down to modern days, do we find that Protestant Episcopal Churches are most eminent for unity and quiet? Supposing these to be always desirable, and the evidence of spiritual life, what says the history of the Church of England? Has she had longer intervals of scriptural peace than the Presbyterian Church? Has she not always had keen parties within her own bosom—parties who occasionally break out with great severity, as in the middle of the seventeenth, the beginning of the eighteenth, and now in the early part of the nineteenth centuries? Was it unity or peace which she communicated to Scotland, when she endeavoured to set up her forms in this land? Was it not rather the most persecuting schism? Have not the most unsound doctrines appeared within her pale, under the very eye of her prelates, without any discipline to preserve her purity? Has there not been on the one hand, the grossest enthusiasm, both in former and present times—Bourignonism, &c., in the one, and modern pretensions to the gift of tongues in the other? Was there not also Socinianism, when 250 ministers, in 1772, petitioned to be released from signing the Articles as the confession of their faith? Is there not semi-Popery now, and has any minister been deposed for any of these, as in the Church of Scotland for much less?

What, too, is the amount of unity of which the Church can boast in the people legally placed under her care, whether in England or in Ireland? It might be expected that a Prelatic Church, if Prelacy be the grand source and bond of union, should, upon the whole, have a religiously united nation under her. Not to speak of Ireland—where, in spite of the healing power of Prelacy, one-half the Protestant population belongs to another communion—what is the state of England,

where Prelacy is so powerful? Is it harmonious and one? Far from it. Perhaps there is no country where the same advantages have been enjoyed, in which greater division prevails. The Church of England has some 10,000 or 12,000 congregations; those not belonging to her communion, and disowning Prelacy, have some 7,000 or 8,000: of course, many are small. How striking the contrast in Scotland! Though when tried by the question of Church and State, there are many Dissenters, when tried by the question of Church government, there is almost universal harmony. There may be 80 Episcopalian congregations (out of the 900 which Prelacy once claimed as her own), and as many Congregationalists; but almost all the remainder, now above 1,800, are Presbyterian—with the Free Church addition, a much larger number.

A few facts may be noticed in this connection, not usually adverted to, but fitted to correct misapprehensions, and honour Presbytery. According to the late census, the population of Presbyterian Scotland is about *one-sixth* of that of Episcopalian England and Wales. Hence, if the countries were the same in point of religious divisions on Church government, Scotland should have a sixth of the parties which divide England. The result is widely different; much more creditable to the religious unity of Scotland, and the strength of Presbytery over a nation. The Congregationalists of England and Wales are estimated to have 1,600 congregations. If the same division of opinion on Church government prevailed in Scotland, proportionally, there should be nearly 270 Independent congregations. There are only 105, and 21 of these are reported as vacant.

The Baptists of England and Wales are rated at 1,520. If the same proportion held in Scotland, there should be much the same number—270 congregations; instead of which, there are 58.

The Wesleyan Methodists have, in England and Wales, above 1,100 preachers, and about 330,000 members. In the same proportion in Scotland, there should have been about 200 preachers, and 55,000

members; instead of which, there are only 30 preachers, and 3,700 members.

The Roman Catholics have 561 priests in England and Wales, and 18 convents. Were Scotland equally divided, or did it equally favour the same soul-destroying system, it should have had 93 priests, and three convents. It has 80 of the one, and one of the other; and that though old Popery has held some parts of the Highlands and Islands as its ancient seat, undisturbed by the Reformation, and though near neighbourhood to Popish Ireland has, in later days, given it superior facilities, which have not been unimproved, for invading the Scottish shores.

I have not been able precisely to ascertain the numbers of the Socinian body in England and Wales. Probably they may count 300 congregations. According to this proportion, Scotland should have 50; but so sound has Presbytery kept the country, that she has not five.

Whether, then, does Prelacy or Presbytery conduce more to union and peace among Christians? There may be peace among the semi-Prelatic Churches of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. But before any thing can be gathered from this, it will be necessary to determine whether the peace be not, to a great extent, the peace of spiritual death; whether division of opinion in the form of separation from the Established Churches, to any considerable extent, be not forbidden and punishable; and whether the moral results wrought out in the nation under this system be not its impressive condemnation. It appears from indubitable official statistics, that Sweden has a larger amount of crime than any State in Europe. (Vide *Laing's Tour*, 1838.)

Let no Episcopalian, then, taunt Presbyterian Scotland with religious division. On the most important points of doctrine and government, perhaps she is the most united country in Protestant Christendom—such is the admirable operation of Presbytery as a whole.

In farther illustration of the views contained in this chapter, it may be noted that, so far from proving the friends of religious unity, whether in doctrine or obser-

vance, several of the present prelates of the Church of England have been the patrons of the most divisive opinions and practices. Though members of a small body of rulers, one (the Bishop of Durham) has published, and never recalled, the most dangerous views on the Canon of Scripture—views fitted to furnish the infidel with ready weapons; another (the Bishop of Exeter) has framed a net-work of questions for the sake of enforcing the belief and inculcation of baptismal regeneration in all the parishes of his diocese, to the express exclusion of all other views; while a third (the Archbishop of Dublin) has given expression to the most erroneous opinions in regard to the obligation of the Sabbath—opinions in the face of the doctrine and service-book of his own Church. Here are three prelates, all alive at the same moment, teaching the most serious error, without any real check or counteractive—one diocese independent of another. Are there any tendencies against unity under Presbyterian rule for one moment to be compared with this?

Then, again, in the small communion of the Scottish Episcopal Church, what a display has there been of late years of discord, both as to doctrine and discipline! Excommunications have been fulminated by bishops—separation after separation has taken place of minister and congregation—English and Irish prelates have been invoked, and expressed their opinions and wishes all in vain—the war has been waged for years, and is not yet over; and all this has occurred in a body which gloried in its quietness and unity! What does this show but the fragile nature of Prelatic peace? It may be affirmed, with truth, that a larger amount of division has been discovered in a shorter time by this very limited communion than by considerable Presbyterian Churches.

And this brings me to notice in contrast, at the same period, the unity of the Free Church of Scotland. Though there were circumstances which one beforehand might have imagined would have led to dispeace in this Church, yet, by the grace of God, it was en-

abled to triumph over them. The most memorable unanimity has characterized all its proceedings, and yet this has not been brought about by the suppression of discussion, or holding different opinions in abeyance. No; there has been the utmost freedom of opinion, and full use made of it. Under God, the harmony has been owing to perfect unanimity of doctrinal sentiment, combined with a free Presbyterian organization. At what period in her history has Prelacy been able to point to a large Church entirely at one in doctrine, discipline, government, and worship? Perhaps the present Episcopal Church of America is the best example to which an admirer of Prelacy could point; but, not to speak of growing and fundamental differences among the clergy—such differences as stretch between Popery and Evangelism—what is the testimony of Bishop Hopkins of Vermont, so recently as 1844? In his "*Letters on the Novelties which Disturb our Peace*," he tells us that, in spite of all the Articles and Canons, there is no standard of unity between the different dioceses, no general regulation; that the decision of one bishop is weakened by the non-agreement of others; and that one of the effects of the disunion is, that aggrieved parties betake themselves to the public press in self-defence—a course which only aggravates the evil. So unsatisfactory is the state of internal regulation in the Church that the necessity of instituting a censorship of the Episcopal press is mooted; and the writer, who is a respectable Evangelical man, is driven to the conclusion that, in the government of the Church, "the distinct approbation of our laity" is indispensable, at least, offers the most likely remedy—in other words, he is driven to Presbyterian ground.

CHAPTER IV.

PRESBYTERIANISM FAVOURABLE TO THE CULTIVATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING.

The present is a day when almost all denominations of Christians are taking steps, if this has not previously been done, for raising up a well educated, if possible, a learned ministry. In these circumstances, it may not be amiss to advert to the established character of Presbyterian Churches in this respect. *They have ever been the warm friends of a well qualified ministry.* When we speak of learning for the pastors of the Church, we do not mean a mere acquaintance with what may have been thought and written by others in every department of knowledge. There is much of this knowledge, which, to a minister of the gospel, is useless, burdening his memory without any corresponding good, and preventing the free exercise of his judgment. In this class may be comprehended very enlarged and minute classical and mathematical attainments, and a laborious acquaintance with ancient history and antiquities. No doubt, these are advantageous in their own place; but where possessed *to the neglect or exclusion of other and more important branches*, they are a hindrance rather than a help. What should be chiefly valued and sought in connection with ministerial education, is a competent share of the knowledge referred to, with an ample measure of all that bears directly or indirectly on the elucidation of the Scriptures in all their parts, together with whatever is fitted to interest

and impress the conscience of a congregation. Tried by this standard, how uninformed would many otherwise learned men be found—men familiarly acquainted with the Classics and the Fathers, but who scarcely know Theology or Church history, or the writings of the Reformers.

Now, the Presbyterian Church has ever encouraged the cultivation of sound learning on the part of her ministers—not everything which bears the name, but what is truly useful. She has been the great patron of widely diffused knowledge among the body of her people, setting up elementary and grammar schools wherever she had the opportunity. This necessarily requires a superior education on the part of her clergy. They could not otherwise be qualified to instruct those whom she places, with awakened intelligence, under their care. Besides, there is nothing ceremonious or gaudy in the Presbyterian form of worship. However scriptural, to the eye of many it will seem naked: this, rendering the hearers more dependent on the minister, makes it the more indispensable that he should be a well-educated, well-informed man, who can bring out of his treasures things new and old. The fact, too, of her ministers being raised, through the intervention of Church courts, above the influence of the humblest of the flock, removes them from the temptation of sinking ministerial qualification. Owing to these, and other circumstances, we would expect that the Presbyterian Church should be the friend of ministerial learning; and we are not disappointed.

To ascend no higher than the Reformation, we uniformly find colleges, professors, literature, and learning, in connection with the Presbyterian Church. So it was in Switzerland, France, Holland, Germany, Scotland. The acquirements of the professors and ministers, always respectable, were often pre-eminent. In point of mere scholarship, not to speak of learning and ability, it will not be easy, in any age, to find superiors to Calvin, Beza, Melancthon, Melville, and, in subsequent times, Blondel, Bochart, Chamier, Spanheim, the Turretines, Pictet,

Calderwood, Boyd, Cameron, Salmasius, Diodati, Mestrezat, Rutherford, Baillie, Gillespie, and a multitude of others. Their works testify to their knowledge and learning. How striking the contrast between the prelates of the Popish Council of Trent and the Protestant Reformers! Though the council was so important, and lasted so long, yet the most learned man among the members, Cajetan, did not know a word of Hebrew, while very many of his coadjutors were as ignorant of Greek as they were rude and unmannerly to each other. How different were the attainments of the Presbyterian Reformers! John Knox and Christopher Goodmen, two Scotch Presbyterians, with others, were translators, at Geneva, of the Bible into English; a version dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, long esteemed, and extensively surviving in the present version, after the lapse of nearly three hundred years. In England, among the Presbyterian Puritans, there were many of surpassing acquirements —Poole, Bates, Flavel, Charnock, Howe, &c. I might fill sheets with the mere names of distinguished ministers and professors, in the Presbyterian Churches, in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, men who were eminent among their contemporaries for learning. While Cartwright, the father of the Puritans, was employed in 1618, by the government of the kingdom, to answer the notes of the Popish version of the Scriptures, brought out at Rheims, and money was advanced from the public purse to defray the expense, the inheritors of his principles, at a later period of the century, produced those books which have ever since been the great staple of popular and practical theology—the universal reading among serious minds in England, Scotland, and America. Who needs to be reminded that the Owens, and the Baxters, the Alleines, the Flavels, the Charnocks, the Howes, whose works, with those of many kindred spirits, have been honoured to transmit evangelical religion from generation to generation, were in principle Presbyterian? Coming down to modern times again, I think it may be safely said, that the Presbyterian Church (to take Scotland for an example) has

never been involved in any controversy, metaphysical or theological—whether affecting doctrine or Church government—the integrity of the Word of God, the Headship of Christ over the nations and over the Church—without having a sufficient number of men to maintain the truth with all adequate argument and learning.

To look at the matter in another light, how ample is the provision which is made in many Presbyterian Churches for the education of young men for the ministry! Not to refer to the colleges of Holland, from whence, in former times, such an array of learned theology was wont to issue—what provision is there in Germany and the United States, in the present day, for theological literature and teaching! The universities of Protestant Germany are well known for their numbers, the full complement of professors and students, the protracted course of study, their immense libraries, the works of theological literature and learning which, from time to time, are sent forth. And with regard to the Presbyterian Church of the United States, it has, throughout all its history, been a zealous advocate of a well-educated ministry. The Rev. Dr. Hodge, its present historian, states, that so early as 1783, the question was raised before the General Assembly, "Whether a person without a liberal education might be taken on trials, or licensed to preach the gospel?" and it was decided in the negative. Two years after, the same question came up in a different form, in connection with a revival of religion, when there was an earnest call for a great number of ministers; still the Church decided, by a large majority, against any departure from an established curriculum of study; and it is worthy of notice, that this was the occasion of the only division in the Presbyterian Church, till recently—a division, not as to doctrine, or discipline, or worship, but as to the propriety, in *all* cases, of adhering to a fixed course of education for candidates for the ministry, however otherwise well qualified. This was the origin of the large body which bears the name of the Cumberland Presbyterians; and, to say the least, the decision was a doubt-

ful one; but few things can better proclaim the Church's zeal for a well-educated ministry. She risked and endured division in its behalf. Maintaining these principles. we need not wonder to learn that the Presbyterian Church, in its different branches, has not less than 18 theological colleges and institutions for the education of young men; and when it is remembered that, for the most part, they reside within the walls, and that their time is not occupied, and their attention distracted, by "private teaching," the professional advantages are the greater. It may be stated, as an interesting fact, in full harmony with the character of the Presbyterian Church, that dividing the 100 American collegiate institutions which teach general literature and science among the different religious denominations, it is found that the Presbyterian Church can claim not less than 58, and nearly 5,000 students, as connected with, or falling under her influence. Tried in the same way, the Baptists, who are Congregationalists, have 8, and the Episcopalians 4. This is a much smaller proportional number than the Presbyterians. The Congregationalists proper have 9. (Vide "*Universities*," *Encyclopædia Britannica*.) Even in the new State of Missouri, on the edge of the wilderness, the Presbyterians have set up a theological seminary for the education of theological students in that State. Surely these facts amply show that, all the world over, and in every age, there is not only no indifference to learning—no favour for ignorance and meagre attainments, in alliance with Presbytery—but that the very opposite qualities belong to this branch of the Christian Church—that she is distinguished among others for her encouragement of sound, substantial, useful acquirements in all her clergy.

With reference to the Churches brought into comparison, I trust not invidiously, it is highly creditable to the Congregationalists of Britain, that, in spite of various disadvantages, they have pursued, and continue to pursue, theological literature and learning with so much success. The names of not a few authors whom they claim, both in former and present times, it is impossible

not to honour. So far as I have been able to learn, the English Congregationalists have at present 10 theological seminaries, which educate about 160 students. The young men are supported during the whole course, which lasts for several years, and devote their time entirely to study. The annual expense is very considerable, and its cheerful contribution most honourable to the religious body, indicating, as it does, just views of the importance of ministerial acquirement. The English Baptists have five similar institutions, maintained at an annual expense of nearly £6,000. And the Independent body in Scotland have a similar seminary, where the course is four years, and the annual expenditure £800. Every enlightened and candid Christian must rejoice in the spirit which such a provision proclaims. At the same time, the system of Church polity is not friendly to a superior style of theological acquirement *as a whole*, nor is there nearly a sufficient number of educated young men. Any man may step into the ministry with whose preaching gifts the individual congregation with which he is associated may happen to be satisfied; and hence it is believed, that though, from what is expected in this country, most Independents have received a liberal education, there are many, and especially of their Baptist brethren, who have been strangers to it. In the United States of America, it is well known that a very large proportion of the Baptist body pass under the name of "an uneducated ministry." It is possible, that in the particular circumstances in which many of them are placed, it is better, for the sake of souls, that they do not wait for a liberal education—that they are not so scrupulous as Presbyterians, but go forth to the desolations of the South and West with such resources as are within command. It is doubtful whether Popery, and many other errors in these regions, can at present be met in any other way. At the same time, there are very serious dangers on the other side; and the history of American revivals bears witness to their magnitude. The Baptists, though numerically the largest body in the United States (compared with any *single* Church),

have only 7 seminaries for the instruction of young men for the ministry—the Presbyterians, we have seen, number 18.

After the facts which have been presented, so creditable to Presbyterianism both in the Old and New Worlds, one would think there could be no room for taunting its friends with indifference to literature and learning. It is well known, however, that no Scotchman, especially in the present day of religious controversy, can speak of these in presence of many members of the Church of England, without being regarded with great incredulity. We are told that the southern Establishment is the only Church which has any claim to learning, and to speak of it in connection with another Church, is pretension. Now, it is freely conceded that Prelacy has often stood in alliance with learning. Some out of the prodigious multitudes of the Romish priesthood, who have been notorious for ignorance, have been men of high literary and theological acquirement. Looking to a Protestant Establishment, perhaps, upon the whole, there is nothing for which the Church of England has been more known and justly distinguished, than the number of learned men whom, from age to age, she has produced, and whose works remain as monuments of their ability. The writings of prelates have been eminently useful in many all-important controversies. But after cheerfully conceding this, it seems very doubtful whether a Prelatic form of Church government has anything to boast of on this account—whether the same services to learning and theology might not have been obtained without Prelacy. From the many admirable works which have been prepared and sent forth from beyond the walls of the Church of England, it would seem that there is no necessary connection between them. It is to be noticed, that the Church of England has not a high standard of acquirement for candidates for orders; that her theological course at college is very meagre; that multitudes of her ministers have never been at college at all; that till lately, if not still, men could come over from other professions, such as the army and

navy, and almost immediately be admitted to her pulpits —it may be, ere long, raised to her Prelatical bench. This does not discover a high idea of the claims of theological literature and learning. There may have been an improvement of late years; but so recently as 1826, all the theological knowledge which was required at Cambridge from candidates for the ministry was equally required from other students—from the students of law or medicine. Of the three professors of theology, neither the Casuistical nor the Regius ever lectured; and the Margaret professor only gave thirty lectures in sixteen years. The Norrisian professor was the sole regular lecturer, and his labours were limited to the evidences. The consequence is, that of late the Church of England has produced few profound theologians—few who are acknowledged to be of this character by foreign nations. Professor Tholuck of Halle notices the contrast in this respect between the present day and the seventeenth century, and the small number of British works of theological erudition which now reach the Continent. Indeed, not a few intelligent friends of the Church of England have no hesitation in declaring that little progress has been made by her sons, in theological literature, since the days of Lowth and Horseley.

Comparisons are proverbially odious, and particularly so as to the attainments of the ministers of different Christian Churches. But, as has been already remarked, the acquirements of Presbyterian pastors are often spoken of disparagingly by the prouder sons of the southern Establishment. In one of the most plausible defences of Episcopacy,* the mere bishops of the Church of England are represented as having done more for the vindication of sound doctrine than all the presbyters of all other Christian communities united! It is not, then, in the way of aggression, but defence, I remind the reader, that if the prelates of England have been the advocates of sound doctrine, very many of them have also been the teachers of errors more or less baneful; and that if many of them have been eminent for learning (which is

* Sinclair's Dissertations, p. 156.

cheerfully conceded), there are not a few of the presbyters of the Continental Churches which, in this respect, cannot be accounted inferior. The early presbyters of the Churches of France, and Holland, and Geneva, were, many of them, as their works attest, men of surpassing attainment, equal to any prelates that England ever produced. It is not necessary to go farther than to so common a book as "Horne's Introduction to the Scriptures," to see in his Bibliography, or account of the works of commentators on the Word of God, that the British and foreign presbyters have no occasion to dread a comparison with English prelates. The list is a long one, extending to a closely-printed volume, and we have no intention, even had we the ability, to enter into it; but among foreign Protestant critics and commentators, it may be safely said, in addition to names already given, that Tremellius and Junius, Drusius, Piscator, Lewis de Dieu, Wetstein, Venema, Vitringa, Bengel, and the authors of the foreign edition of the "Critici Sacri," have no reason to be ashamed of any comparison which may be instituted with other parties. Of the last immense work, the mere supplement was the production of 150 learned men, of whom Adam Clarke, a recent commentator, by no means unfriendly to English prelates, says, "Such a constellation of learned men can scarcely be equalled in any age or country." (*Vide* General Preface to his Commentary.) It may be noticed, that the summary or synopsis of the book, in five folio Latin volumes, the labour of ten years, was the work of a Puritan and Presbyterian (Poole), and that this vast depository of theological learning, together with several others, was written and published, not when Prelacy was honoured and triumphant, but when Presbytery was the order of the day. It is a curious fact, that Walton's Polyglot, in 6 vols. folio, and the British edition of the "Critici Sacri," in 9 vols.—perhaps the two greatest theological works—were prepared in the days of the Commonwealth, and that Cromwell rendered essential aid to the publication of the former.

An important list of Nonconformist commentators,

who could boast only of being presbyters, might be given; but their works are so popular and well known, and have stood the test of generations so creditably, that it is unnecessary. Let me only remind the men who make an invidious boast of the literature and learning of prelates, that in more modern days, and in all departments of knowledge, the German scholars are confessedly the foremost; so much so, that England is glad to translate and copy from their works; and yet they can boast of nothing higher, in point of orders, than the presbyter. If the reader wishes the name of a foreign presbyter whose services to the cause of Protestant truth all will acknowledge, I may remind him of Daille, a humble pastor of the Reformed Church of France. What is the testimony which Bishop Hurd, in his Lectures on Prophecy, bears to his learning and its fruits? "The inconvenience (of the Popish appeal to the fathers) was sensibly felt by the Protestant world, and, after a prodigious waste of industry and erudition, a learned foreigner at length showed the inutility and the folly of pursuing the contest any farther. In a well-considered discourse '*On the use of the Fathers*,' he clearly evinced that their authority was much less than was generally supposed, &c. This discovery had great effects. It opened the eyes of the more candid and intelligent inquirers; and our incomparable Chillingworth, with some others (Jeremy Taylor), took the advantage of it to set the controversy with the Church of Rome once more on its proper foot," &c. (P. 425.) Here is a creditable acknowledgment that the most important service which has been rendered to the cause of the Reformation in modern times, was the deed not of a prelate, but of a Presbyterian, treading, strange to say, the favourite walk of the erudite in the Church of England—the writings of the Fathers.

The same unfounded assertion of the superiority of the learning of Prelacy could be met in other ways—a comparison might be instituted between the bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church and their Presbyterian brethren. It might be asked, if Prelacy be so favour-

able, almost indispensable, to learning, how it happens that not above two or three of this order can lay claim, in the whole course of Scottish history (so far as may be judged from their works), to pre-eminent acquirements—to equal attainments with their leading Presbyterian contemporaries? It might, for instance, be asked, who of them, in point of scholarship or learning, can compare with Andrew Melville? but such comparisons are painful, and we are glad to escape from them. We conclude by reminding those who provoke these discussions, that, admitting all their pretensions to be just, there are other ways of showing a love of knowledge besides the encouragement of learned books from the Episcopal bench—that there are other ways of testing the true operation of a religious system on a nation; and while the Registrar General's documents show, so recently as 1839, that out of 121,000 couples married in England, above 40,000 men and 59,000 women could not sign their own name—the humblest form of writing—Prelacy has little to boast of in connection with the great interests of popular knowledge. She has still less, if that be true which has repeatedly been stated, apparently on good authority, and, so far as we know, never contradicted, that the cathedral towns of England, instead of being far superior to others in point of knowledge and its means, are, generally speaking, noted for the reverse. It may seem scarcely credible, but it is confidently stated, that at Oxford, the very seat of Prelacy, while there are 400 spirit and public houses to a population of 24,000, there is not one public reading room for the middle and working classes, and not one society for the improvement of the rising youth. (*Christian Witness*, May, 1845.)

In comparing the Church of England with others, such as Scotland, in point of ministerial acquirements, it is necessary to remember the relative proportions of the parties compared. It is estimated that some 15,000 persons are in orders in the Church of England. Though many of them be not in actual employment, and cannot be said to pursue their profession, yet they have been

educated more or less with a view to it. It would be strange if, in a free Protestant country, out of such a mass as this, there were not many men of all acquirements. The Church of Scotland has probably little more than 1,500 men standing in the same circumstances. It were unreasonable to expect the same result. Moreover, it is to be remembered that the clergy of the Church of England are not only immensely more numerous, but that they have peculiar facilities for prosecuting literature and learning in such a form as discovers itself in books. A vast body are non-resident—have no cure, or many cures—but do their parochial work by curates —leaving them time, and, through pluralities and large collegiate libraries, furnishing them with resources for pursuing with effect any theological or other inquiry to which they may be inclined. The extent to which such facilities exist may, in part at least, be estimated from the fact, given on the authority of Parliamentary returns, that there are not less than 5,230 curates, on an average salary of only £81 a-year—not a sum, surely, on which a man can afford himself to become learned, however much he may be the means of lightening the work, and so contributing to the learning of others. The encouragements, too, to the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge in connection with the universities, are immense. I have seen it stated, on apparently good authority—that of the Rev. Mr. Jones before the "British Association" in 1838—that besides a vast amount of patronage in a variety of ways, 750 livings, the two great southern universities have, together, nearly 1,000 fellowships, and a revenue of nearly £324,000 a-year. What a prodigious stimulus to study and learning! What a burning reproach were it to any Church so situated if she did not, from year to year, send forth a host of accomplished scholars and theologians. The fellowships are almost as numerous as the benefices of the Church of Scotland; and the revenue of the universities exceeds, by £100,000, that of her entire ecclesiastical Establishment. What wonder that a great deal of learning should be thrown off in England every year? The wonder would be were

it otherwise. Wealth can always command learning. The true way to compare the Church of Scotland with that of England, in this matter, is, not to set a Church of 1,200 against a Church of 12,000, but a Church of 1,200 in Scotland against 1,200 in England; and even with all the immense advantages for study of the English university and ecclesiastical system, it is very doubtful whether the superiority would be so manifest as many imagine. If England were required, for every minister of the Church of Scotland who has been distinguished in any department of literature or theology, to produce 15 equally distinguished in the Church of England, can any question how the balance would turn? Has she 15 metaphysicians like Reid; 15 Biblical critics like Campbell; 15 historians like Robertson; 15 philosophers and theologians like Chalmers? Are her parochial clergy superior in acquirement to the same class of men in Scotland? Let their published discourses testify. There is nothing, then, in Prelacy, as a system, which is superior to Presbytery, as an encouragement to learning among the ministers of the Church; and, if we consider which system has wrought best for the instruction of the great mass of the people, surely there cannot be two opinions among men acquainted with the facts. The services of the Church of England, in connection with popular education, are but of yesterday—those of Scotland are three hundred years old, and are daily growing in strength. And, after all, what is it to have a few men profoundly learned and accomplished, often in branches of no great public utility, in the classics or mathematics, while the great mass of society living under their shadow are allowed to live and die, generation after generation, in the most wretched ignorance, unable to read in their own language the wonderful works of God? Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, in their treatment of the great cause of popular education at the Reformation, and in subsequent times, down to a recent date.

In confirmation of the statements made in this chap-

ter, we may subjoin one or two testimonies to ministerial education among Presbyterians, from competent authorities. These are fitted to show that the cultivation of suitable acquirement in the pastor is no strange thing in the annals of Presbytery—that in all periods, and in all countries, it has been an object of anxious care.

Principal Rule, in his "Second Vindication" of the Church of Scotland, published in 1691, speaking of the period of the Revolution, says: "Our entrants into the ministry are able to vie in learning with the Episcopalian candidates, and are far before them. Some in the late persecution, it is true, were forced to follow other employments for a livelihood. They have now resumed their former studies, but they are not admitted without giving good proof of a competency, at least in knowledge of the Scriptures, and in the controversies of divinity." The Principal states that, even in the knowledge of languages, the Presbyterian students were not inferior—that the friends of the Church made efforts for the appointment of suitable professors, skilled in Oriental tongues.

Among the Presbyterians of Ireland, the spirit was the same. In the Irish edition of Towgood's Letters, it is stated that the Presbyterians always laboured that all their ministers should possess a sufficient knowledge of languages, science, and divinity, and that many regulations were made for this purpose. In the days of Charles II., philosophy was taught at Antrim and other places, as well as theology, and repeatedly rules providing for an extended examination of candidates were adopted.

With regard, again, to the Presbyterian Churches of the Continent, we have the testimony of Bishop Burnet, in the History of his Own Times. After spending some time among them, he writes thus, in 1686: "I was indeed amazed at the labours and learning of the ministers among the Reformed. They understood the Scriptures well in the original tongues. They had all the points of controversy very ready, and did thoroughly understand the whole body of divinity. In many places

they preached every day, and were almost constantly employed in visiting their flock."

Surely a more beautiful testimony from a prelate to Presbyterian ministers could not be rendered. Long may the pastors of Presbyterian Churches be distinguished for the qualities which drew forth the admiration of Bishop Burnet!

CHAPTER V.

PRESBYTERIANISM FAVOURABLE TO LOYALTY.

Few charges against Presbyterianism have been more common than that it is inconsistent with monarchy, and tends to civil insubordination and sedition. This is not a matter of idle talk or surmise. It has been gravely propounded in large books written against the government of the Church of Scotland. It was a celebrated maxim of James VI., "No bishop, no king;" and when any one has, notwithstanding, spoken of the loyalty of Presbyterians, it has been common to point to the execution of Charles I. as conclusively deciding the point of the rebellious character of Presbytery. Now, were this charge true, it would be a serious drawback from the good qualities which we have alleged in behalf of Presbyterianism—it would go far to neutralize them. Insubordination to civil authority is a very serious matter. Submission is expressly required by God—on the ground not merely of social expediency, but of solemn duty. We are to obey, not in dread of punishment only, but for conscience' sake. Christianity recognises and hallows the social bond of obedience. But the charge is not only not true—it is, like many similar charges, the very opposite of the truth. Christians might have been prepared for it. In every age evangelical religion has been charged with civil insubordination; and as Presbyterian Christians have generally exhibited much of

the evangelical religion which existed in the world at the time, and have, moreover, constitutionally presented a strong front in its behalf, by means of their Church courts, so the allegation has come to be peculiarly charged upon them; but it is the old allegation against evangelical religion, and, whether directed against it or against Presbyterianism, is utterly false.

I need not enter on the proof, from Scripture and ecclesiastical history, that true religion has, in every age, been accused of disloyalty and sedition; nor need I refer to the satisfactory explanations which can be given of the origin of the charge. It is, doubtless, founded in the enmity of men to the truth—gospel, law, and government of Christ. Ashamed to express this in as many words, they veil their persecution under plausible pretexts, of which regard for social authority is one of the most popular. The Apostle Peter (1 Epist. ii. 15), when exhorting the Christians of early times to be submissive to the civil magistrate (of course only in *lawful* things), encouraged them to do so by the consideration that thus they would "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men"—implying that, even in his day, there were many who charged them with being rebels, and that it was only by well-doing that they could hope to put down the calumny.

That Presbyterianism holds no connection with disloyalty, is abundantly plain. There is nothing in its distinguishing principles inconsistent with civil authority in any form, whether monarchical or republican. Are the office of ruling elder, courts of review, and the parity of pastors in the Church, at war with kingly authority and civil submission in the State? Where is the point of variance? * If we look at the Confessions of Faith

* It was indeed a favourite sentiment of James VI., which he exhorts his son (in the *Basilicon*, lib. ii.) never to forget, that "parity is the mother of confusion." But there is no proof of this, or rather, there is ample evidence of the contrary. Prelacy magnifies *mere* government much more than Presbytery. It constitutes the bishop or governor the highest and most honoured officer; whereas Presbytery represents the preacher of the gospel as fulfilling the most honourable part of the sacred calling. The latter,

of Presbyterian Churches, we find them full of the soundest sentiment in regard to the civil magistrate—as full, if not fuller, than those of any other Church. They call upon all the members to be submissive, not merely to Christian but even to Heathen kings and tyrants, such as Nero. It may not be amiss to notice a few of these.

The AUGUSTAN, or German Confession, which is the standard of a Presbyterian Church, says: "Christians must necessarily obey the existing magistrates and laws, save when they command to sin. Then they must obey God rather than man." (Acts iv.) The FRENCH Confession, the standard of a strictly Presbyterian Church, runs in similar terms: "We maintain, then, that we ought to obey laws and statutes, and pay tribute, and bear other burdens, and undergo the yoke with a good will, although the magistrates should be infidels, provided God's sovereign authority remain entire and inviolate." The HELVETIC or SWISS Confession, also thoroughly Presbyterian, bears: "As God will work the safety of his people by the magistrate whom he hath given to the world as a father, so all subjects are commanded to acknowledge that benefit in the magistrate. Let them honour and reverence the magistrate as the minister of God—let them love and assist him, and pray for him as their father. Let them obey him in all his just and equitable commands; let them pay all imposts and tributes, and all other dues of that kind faithfully and willingly; and if the public safety of the country and justice require it, and the magistrate undertake a war by necessity, let them also

therefore, one would think less likely to create confusion. Besides, if parity be essentially the parent of disorder, what shall be thought of the Houses of the British Parliament, which present the most perfect picture of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church —*complete parity* with a speaker or moderator, who has no authority of superior rank, but merely of regulation, to which he has been called by his brethren? Is Parliamentary parity, then, the source of confusion? What, too, shall be thought of the Houses of Convocation in the Church of England, and similar courts in the Scottish Episcopal Church, in which there are important elements of parity. Are they, too, "the mothers of confusion?"

lay down their lives, and spill their blood for the good of the public and of the magistrate, and that in the name of God, willingly, valiantly, cheerfully; for he that opposeth himself to the magistrate provoketh the heavy wrath of God upon himself." The SAXON Confession might be added to the same purpose. The BOHEMIAN runs in these terms: "Let all and every one yield subjection, in all things that are no ways contrary to God, unto the higher power, first to the king's majesty, and next to all magistrates and those that are in authority in what offices soever they are placed, whether the men be good or bad, as also to all their deputies and officers; and let them defer to them all honour, and perform all things which are due to them by right; let them pay unto them also the homage, imposts, tribute, and the like, which they are obliged to pay and perform." The WALDENSIAN Confession, which dates so far back as 1120, says: "We ought to honour the secular powers by submission, ready obedience, and paying of tribute." The sentiment of all the SCOTTISH Confessions is well known—that of Westminster is conveyed in these words: "It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates, to honour their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues; to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority for conscience' sake. Infidelity or difference in religion doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him, from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempt," &c.

Such are the views of the leading Presbyterian Confessions on civil obedience; and what can be more entirely loyal? The very men, such as Luther, Calvin, Zuingle, whom Papists have accused of propagating seditious principles, were the thorough approvers, if not the actual writers, of the very Confessions from which we have been quoting. And in accordance with these articles of faith, how eminent have the Presbyterian Churches ever been for loyalty! Though shamefully persecuted in Piedmont, France, Holland, Germany,

Scotland, &c., by Popish and other rulers, how submissive have they been in all civil things! How did they honour the civil magistrate in his own province, and occasionally draw the admiration even of oppressive masters, by their fidelity, industry, loyalty, and courage! A few cases may be referred to. The Waldenses, eminently a nation of martyrs, are uniformly designated in the royal edicts, "Our faithful subjects." It was long before the dukes of Savoy could be prevailed upon by Popish emissaries to persecute a people so remarkable for their loyal attachment; and after persecution had begun and ceased, repeatedly did the Popish rulers bear witness to its generosity and strength. Similar was the character of the French Protestants. For the first forty years of their Reformation, though numerous and afflicted, they were so submissive that they were not even brought into collision with secular power. On subsequent occasions they were repeatedly engaged in war; but politics, not religion, was the chief source of the contest, and in this they took a part with a large body of their Roman Catholic countrymen. Nothing on this point can be more appropriate than what is said in their defence by James VI.* Writing in 1615, when France was at peace, he says: "I never knew yet that the French Protestants took arms against their king. In the first troubles they stood only on their defence. Before they took arms, they were burned and massacred everywhere; the quarrel did not begin for religion," &c. "It shall not be found that they made any other war. Nay, is it not true that Henry III. sent armies against, to destroy them, and yet they ran to his help as soon as they saw him in danger? Is it not true that they saved his life at Tours, and delivered him from extreme peril? Is it not true that they never forsook either him or his successor in the midst of the revolt and rebellion of most part of his kingdom, raised by the pope and the greater part of his clergy? Is it not true that they have assisted him in all his battles, and helped much to raise the crown again, which was ready to fall?"

* In his Right of Kings, p. 14.

It is well known how much Henry IV. was indebted to his Protestant and Presbyterian subjects, and that the edict of Nantes was intended as a reward for their loyal adherence. In 1617, Louis XIII., in a letter to their ecclesiastical synod, testified to their past "fidelity and obedience;" and his son, Louis XIV., repeatedly employed the same language. Indeed, he in a great measure owed his crown to their exertions, and acknowledged that they had given proof "of their fidelity and zeal for his service beyond all that could be imagined, and contributed in all things to the welfare and advantage of his affairs." The *Edinburgh Christian Instructor* of 1813, vindicating the loyalty of Presbyterians against the insinuations of an English assailant, thus characterizes the loyalty of the French Presbyterians: "We request the reviewers to look back to the history of the Reformed Churches in France, which were strictly Presbyterian, and they will see there an exhibition of loyalty which it has never been given to the Presbyterians (we may add, much more the Prelatists) of any country to display—of loyalty to despots who had no feeling of kindness or pity to their subjects—of loyalty in the midst of persecutions the most cruel and bloody to which men were ever subjected—of loyalty which remained undiminished even after recourse to the sword had become an act of necessity, and neither forgot itself in victory nor was soured and alienated by defeat—of loyalty which was rather to be blamed for its excess than doubted of for its existence or sincerity, and which we are firmly convinced would never have been carried to such a height by the people either of England or Scotland. We refer our readers to Laval, Beza, D'Aubigné, Mezeray, Thuanus, and every writer, indeed, who has given an account of the civil wars of France, with the exception of a few Roman Catholics, whose religious prejudices led them to indulge in misrepresentations which they had not honesty enough to withhold." (P. 427.) Other illustrations might be given, but let these suffice. That Presbyterians were reluctantly constrained occasionally to resist the tyrannous exercise of civil power, invading

the conscience and trampling on rights guaranteed by oaths, is true; but this is no more than the British sovereigns, Elizabeth, James, and Charles I., by their own example, in encouraging the subjects of foreign states to rise against their sovereign, sanctioned. It is no more than what the Church of England and the English nation, under the rule of Prelacy, did, and justly did, in the ever memorable Revolution of 1688.

The most popular and plausible charge against the Presbyterians of the three kingdoms, is the giving up of Charles I., as is alleged, for a bribe, and then putting him to death. Now, admitting all this to be true, what could be more unfair than to attempt to determine the general character of an ecclesiastical system, in all ages, from the conduct of a few adherents on a very sad, and withal trying occasion in its history? But there is not one word of truth in the charge. Though the king's duplicity and cruelty were notorious—driving 20,000 of his best subjects across the Atlantic, when it was a more formidable matter to cross the ocean than it is now—yet they endured with marvellous patience, and were constrained only by dire necessity to take up arms. To say that they sold their king is a statement as anti-national as ignorant. A sum of money, agreed upon years before, for the support of the Scottish army, was paid *four months* before there were any steps taken in regard to the sovereign by the two nations; and the Presbyterians of Scotland, England, and Ireland, remonstrated and protested against the contemplated execution in the strongest possible manner—in a stronger manner than can be alleged of any other religious party. The *real* authors of the king's death were his Prelatic counsellors. The *proximate* were the Sectaries, who were as much opposed to Presbytery as to Prelacy. As this baseless calumny is still repeated, to the prejudice of Presbyterianism, and is the only act having the air of plausibility to those who will not examine and distinguish, it may not be amiss to quote the words of FIFTY-SEVEN learned and godly Presbyterian ministers of London, in a remonstrance which they gave in before the trial, and which

they presented at the hazard of their own safety. They say: "We hold ourselves bound, in duty to God, religion, the king, parliament, and kingdom, to profess before God, angels, and men, that we verily believe what is now so much feared to be in agitation—the taking away of the life of the king in the present way of trial—is not only not agreeable to any word of God, the principles of the Protestant religion (never yet stained with the least drop of the blood of a king), or the fundamental constitution of the kingdom; but contrary to them, as also to the oath of allegiance, the protestation of May 5, 1641, and the solemn league and covenant; from all which engagements we know not of any power on earth able to absolve us or others."

Such was the Presbyterian protest against the trial or sentence of Charles I.—a protest shared in by the whole Presbyterian people of the three kingdoms; and well was its sincerity proved by their immediately crowning the monarch's son in Scotland as king; by refusing publicly to pray for Cromwell, as protector, for years; and by an actual martyrdom into loyalty. Christopher Love, an eminent Presbyterian minister of London, suffered unto the death for no other reason than his attachment to the family and rights of Charles II. Perhaps those who will not be moved by any other authority, may, on such a point as the death of the king, listen to the opinion of Sir George M'Kenzie, the Lord Advocate of Scotland, during the times of the persecution. Writing of the Presbyterians, he says: "Even our rebellious countrymen delivered him (the king) only up to such of our neighbour nation as did swear upon oath that they should *preserve him and his crown;* and when they found that these sectarians neither regarded their oath nor their king, they raised an army immediately, to expiate their crime. Nor wanted ever our nation (Scotland) an army, even under the usurpers, to appear for the monarchy; and from us, and encouraged by us, went that army that restored our present king."*

If any farther evidence were needful, we might appeal

* Vindication of his Majesty's Government, 1683, p. 5.

to Bishop Burnet, who, in the *History of his Own Times*, testifies that the Presbyterians were much against the king's death, fasting and praying for his preservation. We might appeal also to Echard, Clarendon, Rapin, to the fact that the Presbyterians accounted the charge a slander, and indignantly resented it, appealing to Lord Hollis, Richard Baxter, and many others then living, for the truth of the contrary. But, perhaps, the reader may wish to see the testimony of such a man as Principal Rule. It is less accessible than the others, and was given forth in 1691. Vindicating his calumniated country, he asks, "Did Scotland ever set up a commonwealth, as England once did? It is known what they adventured and suffered for the monarchy when England abjured it. And what yielding was in Scotland to the anti-monarchical way, was by force from England. And it *is known to all who lived in these days*, that the Presbyterians did cleave more firmly to their banished king, and prayed for him with more constancy and resolution, than that party did who after appeared for Episcopacy." In harmony with this, their London brethren, we are informed by Palmer, in the *Nonconformists' Memorial*, attended him on his restoration with their acclamations, and, by the hands of old Mr. Jackson, presented him with a richly-adorned Bible, which he (Charles II.) told them would be the rule of his actions!"

Passing from the Presbyterians generally to those of Scotland in particular, at a later day, can it be alleged that it was for rebellion that they suffered? No doubt this was the charge, just as it was the charge in the case of the Old Testament prophets, and of our blessed Lord and his apostles, and the primitive Christians. In none of these instances were the parties ostensibly persecuted. No; they only suffered for pretended sedition and rebellion. This has always been the course of the men of the world. They shrink from appearing in the naked character of persecutors. Bad as the world is, this would defeat the object, and hence they dress up Christians in the skins of wild beasts, before they give them to the lions. Though cowardly, this is the uniform

practice. In the case of the Scottish sufferers, nothing could be more shamefully false than the cry of rebellion. I subjoin two or three sentences from dying testimonies breathed forth by martyrs in passing into eternity.

The MARQUIS OF ARGYLE says: "I had no accession to his late majesty's *horrid and execrable murder*, by counsel, or knowledge of it, or any other manner of way. And I pray the Lord preserve his majesty, and to pour out his best blessing on his person and government."

The Rev. JAMES GUTHRIE says: "God is my record that, for the things for which sentence of death has been passed against me, I have a good conscience. I bless God they are not matters of compliance with Sectaries, or designs or practices against his majesty's person, or government of his royal father. My heart, I bless God, is conscious to no disloyalty—nay, loyal I have been, and I commend it unto you to be loyal and obedient in the Lord."

LORD WARRISTON says: "I am free, as I shall now answer before God's tribunal, from any accession, by counsel, or contrivance, or any other way, to his late majesty's death, or to their making that change of government; and I pray the Lord to preserve our present king, his majesty, and to pour out His best blessings upon his royal posterity."

CAPTAIN ARNOT, with nine others who suffered with him on the same day, said: "We are condemned by men, and esteemed by many as rebels against the king, *whose authority we acknowledge;* but this is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience."

JOHN WILSON said: "For my part, I pray that the Lord may bless our king with blessings from heaven; and I pray for all who are in authority under his majesty."

JAMES LEARMONT says: "My dear friends, I give my testimony against that calumny cast upon Presbyterians, that they are seditious and disloyal persons, the which assertion I do abhor; therefore I exhort all people

that they will show loyalty to the king and all lawful magistrates, and all their just and lawful commands."

The Rev. JOHN KING says: "The Lord knows, who is the searcher of hearts, that neither my design nor practice was against his majesty's person and just government, but I always intended to be loyal to lawful authority in the Lord. I thank God that my heart does not condemn me of any disloyalty. I have been loyal, and do recommend it to all to be obedient to the higher powers in the Lord."

Such was the loyal spirit of the Scottish Presbyterians even in the most trying times, and such it has been in every age. Apart from every thing else, the "Solemn League and Covenant" which they had sworn, and which so many now misunderstand and misrepresent, *bound* them to loyalty more than others. Their subsequent history has strikingly illustrated the same features of character. The Rev. Mr. Williamson, one of the ministers of the West Kirk, Edinburgh, preaching before the General Assembly, as moderator, in 1703, thus expressed himself in regard to Presbyterian loyalty. He was addressing an audience who were well able, from their own experience, to judge of the accuracy of his statements: "These fourteen years' experience may stop the mouth of impudence itself respecting the peacefulness of Presbytery. During one hundred years there has not been such a long tract of tranquillity in Scotland. Civil government has been advantageously managed in several of the most eminent Reformed Churches (contemporaneously) with that discipline of Christ's house for which we plead. None maintain more loyal principles towards kings than Presbyterians, who think themselves *obliged* to fear God and honour the king, and to be always ready to obey him in the Lord. Many, if not the greater part of the Episcopal clergy, would not pray for the king, William."

Nor was there any diminution of Scottish loyalty at a later day. In the rebellion of 1745, who were more loyal or so loyal as the Presbyterians? The Duke of

Cumberland, the commander of the king's troops, speaking of the clergy of the Church of Scotland, declared, "I owe it in justice to them to say, that, upon *all* occasions, I have received from them professions of the most inviolable attachment to his majesty's person and government, and have always found them ready and forward to act in their several stations in all such affairs as they could be useful in, though often to their own great hazard." (Quoted in *Towgood's Letters*, 15th edition, p. 221.)

It may be less known, but it is not less honourable to Presbytery, that the Rev. Adam Gibb, a Presbyterian minister of Edinburgh, though a seceder from the National Establishment, raised not less than three companies of volunteers, mainly from his own congregation, to quell the rebellion; and so impressed was the government of the day with his services, and those of his brother minister, the Rev. Ralph Erskine, that they warmly acknowledged them in a letter of thanks. It may be added that, at the present moment, a far larger proportion of the British army is composed of Scottish Presbyterians, according to the general population of the nation, than of English or Irish. Whatever explanation may be given of the fact, it certainly does not countenance the idea of any alliance between disloyalty and Presbytery, at least the rulers of the British nation have not, from observation, been led to detect any such relationship.

The same spirit has ever been manifested by the Presbyterians of Ireland. They may, in common with the vast body of the intelligence and piety of Britain, have concurred with the Parliament in the early and necessary resistance to royal tyranny; but when faction in the army began to pervert a cause which was good, and indicate a disposition to subvert all royal authority, with their brethren throughout Great Britain, they took part with the monarch, and nobly stood by his cause. Though treated with great ingratitude, they used all the influence with the leaders in the army which they could command, to persuade them to be loyal to the king and

spare his life; read official "declarations" from their pulpits against the anti-monarchical principles which the perversity and duplicity of the king's counsellors were the grand means of creating and spreading; prayed for the king's son; maintained his cause in Ulster; and warned the people against his enemies, and that at a time when the whole province was in the power of the army. Nay, more, not a few of them suffered for their loyalty. Their influence was such, that the council of war passed an act of banishment against them, and, but for an accident, many would have been transported beyond the seas. As it was, they were deprived by Cromwell of the tithes which they had enjoyed, and a small precarious provision was substituted, the better to break down their principles. I need not say that they have been loyal ever since. In the Popish rebellion of 1799, they stood true to the old character of Presbytery, and to their country. The Synod of Ulster had, upon a review of the whole proceedings, reason to record, "That the general condition of its members and probationers was conformable to order and good government in the late afflicting circumstances of the country." Only a very few members of the Presbyterian Church had proved disloyal, and the ecclesiastical courts subjected them to discipline on this account. It is notorious that the Irish Presbyterians continue pre-eminent for their loyalty, and that, at the present moment, they form a chief safeguard of the integrity of the British empire in the sister island.

The same holds true of evangelical Presbyterianism wherever, in the providence of God, it has been planted. In 1775, the year before the declaration of American independence, it appears, from Hodge's History of the Presbyterian Church of America, that the Synods of New York and Philadelphia addressed a pastoral letter to the Churches under their authority, in which the following statement occurs: "In carrying on this important struggle, let every opportunity be taken to express your attachment and respect to our sovereign, King George III., and to the Revolution principles by which

his august family were seated on the British throne. We recommend, indeed, not only allegiance to him from principle and duty, as the first magistrate of the empire, but esteem and reverence for the person of the prince who has merited well of his subjects on many accounts, and who has probably been misled into his late and present measures by those about him. Neither have we any doubt that they themselves have been, in a great degree, deceived by false representations from interested persons residing in America. It gives us the greatest pleasure to say, from our own certain knowledge of *all belonging to our communion*, and from the best means of information of far the greatest part of all denominations in this country, that the present opposition to the measures of administration does not in the least arise from disaffection to the king, or a desire of separation from the parent state. We are happy in being able, with truth, to affirm, that no part of America would either have approved or permitted such insults as have been offered to the sovereign in Great Britain. We exhort you, therefore, to continue in the same disposition, and not to suffer oppression, or injury itself, to provoke you to anything which may seem to betray contrary sentiments. Let it ever appear that you only desire the preservation and security of those rights which belong to you as freemen and Britons, and that reconciliation upon these terms is your most ardent desire." What could breathe a spirit of more enlightened loyalty, blended with just sentiments of freedom, than these pastoral counsels? In perfect harmony with them, it deserves to be recorded, to the honour of the Presbyterian Church in the Canadas at the present day, that, though smarting from what might have provoked against British rule, its office-bearers and members were among the warmest and most useful friends of British authority in the recent rebellion; that not one of their number was found in the ranks of disaffection; and that their influence, physical as well as moral, contributed, in an important degree, to the speedy restoration of peace and order.

And now, shortly, to turn to other forms of Church

government, I make no charge against modern Independency. I believe it to be perfectly loyal, and that there are as warm friends of the British constitution in its ranks as in any other denomination. But it can scarcely be doubted that their democratical form of Church rule is more favourable to political democracy than a more limited representative government; and it cannot be forgotten, that, with some exceptions, the Independents were the great patrons of the anti-monarchical principles of the seventeenth century. It may be stated that, among Evangelical Dissenters, the Methodist body have ever been distinguished for their loyalty. They occupy a central position between Prelacy and other forms of Church government; though they did not appear till several occasions of testing loyalty in this country were over, yet it cannot be questioned that they would have stood faithful had they been then in existence. George Whitefield, in his "Letter to the Rev. Dr. Durell," on the expulsion of six students from Oxford in 1768, in the judgment of his biographer, the ablest of his productions, says, referring to the examples of Christ and his apostles, "Fain would the Methodists copy after such gloriously divine examples; and, blessed be God! after *a trial of near forty years*, upon the most severe scrutiny, their loyalty cannot be justly so much as once called in question; for as they fear God, so they dearly love and honour their king, their rightful sovereign King George, and have been, and continue to be, steady, invariable friends to the Protestant succession in the illustrious house of Hanover." This is the more creditable when it is remembered to what irritation and oppression they were subjected, from various classes of their countrymen, in the earlier periods of their history. In so far as Calvinistic Methodism is Presbyterian, this form of government is entitled to claim a share in the credit of its good character.

With regard to Prelacy in connection with loyalty: If loyalty consists in a blind worship of the reigning sovereign, no matter what his character or his acts, however unconstitutional and tyrannical, there may not be

much ground for calling in question its loyalty. It is only in this sense that the maxim of James VI. is true, "No bishop, no king"—rather, no tyrant. Understood more constitutionally, Prelacy, however trustworthy now, has not always been loyal. Is it necessary to say how prelates, in days of Popery, stirred up disaffection in kingdoms, both in Scotland and England; for example, how Richard II. of the latter was robbed of his dominion; and how Parliament found it indispensable, in the reign of Edward VI., to deprive them of their usurped power over the crown? In the seventeenth century, who were at the bottom of the civil troubles of the land? According to the testimony of candid Episcopalians themselves, it was the Prelatic Laud and his party. He dealt in gross encroachments on the consciences and liberties of the people. In Scotland, again, in the succeeding century, who were the prime movers of the rebellions in behalf of the deposed house of Stuart? Did they not consist of the Roman Catholics and nonjuring Episcopalians—in other words, of a combination of Prelatists?

A few facts may be stated in confirmation of these views. Were it necessary, one might refer to the maxims and proceedings of the Jesuits—a powerful order in a Prelatic Church—so dangerous to thrones that they have been repeatedly suppressed even in Roman Catholic countries; but it would be unfair to Protestants to compare them with such a body. To turn, however, to a party who make a boast of their loyalty, and many of whom were wont to be suspicious of that of their Presbyterian neighbours, I would ask, whether Scottish Episcopacy has, in this respect, much to boast of? It is notorious that a very large body of them—in short, the party which did not conform to the Established Church at the Revolution in 1688—remained disaffected to the present reigning family, and did not abandon that disaffection till the death of Charles Edward Stuart, in 1788. In other words, this religious body lived in a state of disaffection for one hundred years, till they could keep it up no longer. Can a similar statement be made

in regard to any other Christian Church? It appears from the "Narrative of the Proceedings" of the Relief Bill, in 1792, drawn up by one of the bishops, that the bill was objected to in the House of Lords, on the score of the former connection of the Episcopal clergy with the Pretender. The preamble of the act refers to their disaffection, and provides that the minister who omits praying for the present royal family by name, shall, for a second offence, be declared incapable of officiating for three years. The Earl of Elgin, who spoke in favour of the bill, went over the different penal enactments, and showed that they were intended "to check the disaffection which was known to prevail, at the time they were passed, among the Episcopalians in Scotland." The bishop of St. David's, also a supporter, maintained, that the refusal to pray for the royal family by name "stood upon no better ground than that of *gross and avowed disaffection.*" It is an interesting fact, that the success of the bill was, in a considerable degree, owing to the friendly interposition of the Church of Scotland—to the letters of Principal Robertson, Dr. Campbell, and Dr. Gerard, to leading men in England; so that, in this way, the Presbyterian Church had an opportunity of requiting with kindness the harsh treatment which she had received at the hands of Episcopacy at an earlier season. Surely the members of this Church are not the parties who should charge the Church of Scotland with disaffection or rebellion? That it may not be supposed I am putting too strong an interpretation upon the Parliamentary proceedings in connection with Scottish Episcopacy, I appeal to the statement of the Rev. Mr. Skinner, a warm partisan. Writing of the Scottish Episcopal Church, as it appeared in 1788, he says, that his father, the bishop, "saw the considerations of State policy constraining the class of landed proprietors, whether peers or commoners, and nearly all of the Episcopal persuasion in public stations, *to turn their backs upon the altar of their native Church, that they might support the throne of their native land.*"* In other words, continued alle-

* Annals.

giance to their Church was not consistent with loyalty to the throne of the realms! They abandoned the Church, because they could not otherwise be loyal to their king. When could this be alleged of the Scottish or any other Presbyterian Church?

At the present day, I do not call in question the loyalty of any evangelical party. All that I contend for is, that Presbyterians are as loyal as any other—that Scotland is as loyal as England—that, in times of national danger, Presbyterians have contributed in as large proportion, whether of money, or men, or courage, to the defence of their country, as the members of any Prelatic Church; in short, that there is nothing in Presbytery inconsistent with enlightened loyalty. In addition to this, looking to the history of the past, I humbly think that Presbyterians are entitled to say that the form of ecclesiastical government for which they contend has been more frequently found in alliance with fervent loyalty than other forms of rule.

It has often been alleged that Presbytery is republican in its constitution, and that republican ideas and feelings must be its fruit. Of course, as an objection, this can be alleged with propriety only by Prelatists. Congregationalists cannot urge it without laying themselves open to the more serious charge of democratic tendency. But there is no force in the allegation of which any Presbyterian has reason to be ashamed. In so far as republicanism is identified with representative government, Presbytery may be described as republican; just in the same sense all the leading councils of the Christian Church were republican, and the British constitution embraces a large republican element, yea, the governing one. Indeed, the first real illustrations of representative government are to be found in the early councils of the Church. The State here borrowed from the Church, as Sir James M'Intosh substantially allows. (*History of England*, p. 43.) There is nothing, however, in all this discreditable to Presbytery, but the reverse. History has amply and impressively shown that its representative principles and courts can and do move

on in harmony with the most devoted attachment to monarchy—such attachment as has seldom been equalled, certainly never surpassed, by religious bodies whose ecclesiastical might be supposed to be more favourable to their civil government. The truth is, that Presbyterian Church government, drawn as it is from the Word of God, is quite peculiar. It finds no exact parallel in any form of civil rule; while the democratic element may be said to enter in the popular election by the members, the republican in its representative councils, there is a decided recognition of the aristocratic in the judgment of qualification of members, and the power of license and ordination, translation, deposition, &c. These functions are inherent and permanent; only those who are in office can transmit office. Thus Presbytery stands alone, and on the same ground on which it is charged with republican tendency, it might be charged with the opposite. There is no real force in either. Presbyterianism is wide-spread. It needs to be able to live under all forms of political government, and it is equally trustworthy under them all. Nor is this matter of wonder, for if it be conducive, as we have shown, to the maintenance of divine truth, Christian union, and ministerial and popular education—then, by making men good Christians, it must make them the best subjects.

The more frequent collisions which, in the history of Scotland, have taken place between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, than between the same parties in England, are not owing to any greater tendency to civil insubordination in the one case over the other, but to the fact of the greater prevalence of true religion in the one country above the other, leading men to contend for *all* that belongs to them as Christians. The peculiarities of the union between Church and State in Scotland, and the temptations of civil judges to put a wrong interpretation upon statutes affecting the Church of Scotland, from the vicinity of England, whose Establishment is regulated on opposite principles, explain the difference still farther. It is certain that the doctrine of the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ over the

Church and over the State—the great doctrine which has given rise to so much recent discussion—not only has not the most remote relationship to rebellion, but holds such a connection with civil allegiance that the British Crown never had in former times, as it has not now, more devoted loyalists than the Presbyterians, who regard that doctrine as vital and supreme.

CHAPTER VI.

PRESBYTERIANISM FAVOURABLE TO CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

While Presbytery has ever, as we have seen, proved herself the friend of loyalty, she has been not less certainly the friend of freedom, civil and religious. These, so far from being inconsistent, are happily harmonious. A man may love his sovereign, and love liberty, yet keep both in their proper place. Indeed, this is the character and attainment of all true Christians. Loyalty and liberty are the fruit of living, evangelical religion.

It is not necessary to say any thing of the importance of freedom. However frequently it may have been abused to licentiousness, and accompanying tyranny—whatever may have been the crimes which have been perpetrated in its sacred name—there is no question that there is such a thing as liberty, civil and religious, that it is an inestimable blessing, and that it is inseparably bound up with the interests of true religion, knowledge, and civilization—in short, the welfare of man for time and eternity. I rejoice in liberty, not merely for its own sake, as ungodly men may rejoice in it, but chiefly as an instrument of good to society, to the Church, and the world; and because its opposite, especially where severe, is deeply injurious to the character and progress, if not to the existence, of that religion which is the handmaid of human happiness. "True liberty," to adopt the definition of a sound Calvinistic divine, "does not consist in an inflammatory turbulence of conduct, in an unlimited

indecency of speech, or a blind attachment to party, but in the legal safety and good order of each for the advantage of the whole. It does not consist in licentiousness, or the power of doing evil with impunity, but the privilege of doing all the good we can, and enjoying, without molestation or fear, as much personal happiness as is consistent with the written law of God, the unwritten law of conscience, and the welfare of society at large." * Liberty, as thus defined, is not understood or appreciated by man in his natural state of depravity. Enlightened reason may approve of it when stated; and the constitution of one political system, apart from the knowledge of true religion, may, from various causes, approach nearer to it than others; but man's narrow views and selfish passions, particularly his love of power, and want of regard for, and confidence in, his neighbour, will prevent him ever realizing the freedom which has been described. True religion, however, directly leads to it. It cultivates intellect, and so makes the man thoughtful —enlightens his conscience, and so gives peace and guidance—represses his selfishness, while it teaches self-denial, and a kind regard to the rights, privileges, and happiness of others. Thus it both makes men capable of freedom for themselves, and disposes them to concede freedom to others At the same time, it renders them objects of public confidence. These are the very ele ments of liberty; and without them, whatever may be the vauntings of philosophers or political orators, freedom can exist only in name. It will not reach the mass of the people, and it will be in great danger of perishing, even when attained.

Now, Presbyterianism, as a scriptural form of true religion, and an efficient dispenser of its knowledge and blessings, is, and must be, a friend of Freedom. Accordingly, all history testifies to this truth. Without interfering with the particular form of civil government under which men live, it makes them both good rulers and good subjects; the result of which is, the greatest amount of happiness to individuals consistent with the order and

* Toplady's Works, p. 394.

good of the whole. It is well known, that in modern Europe, the rise of freedom was contemporaneous with the revival of Protestant evangelical religion. This was the first thing to check, and ultimately subvert, the civil and religious despotism of Popery. The reading of the Word of God in the vernacular languages, and the oral preaching of the Gospel, were far more powerful than any other means. Some may ask, What is the connection between civil and religious freedom? They are always seen together, flourishing or fading. It is not difficult to trace the relationship. True religion calls men to the exercise of private judgment on the most momentous questions. It marks off a large field for conscience, and declares, that into that field civil authority shall not enter, unless at the risk of being disobeyed. It imparts a deep feeling of responsibility, and braces men to endure the loss of all things sooner than relinquish their religious convictions. This state of things is most favourable to the creation, growth, and diffusion of civil liberty. Men have but to extend to the matters of civil life the principles which they cherish in regard to religion, and they are free. Besides, supremely valuing their religion, they will naturally avail themselves of civil rights and privileges, as a protection to the undisturbed exercise of faith and practice. In this way it is easy to see how the religious principles of the Reformation directly conducted to civil freedom; and how modern Protestants are so deeply indebted to the sacrifices and sufferings of their forefathers. These, whether immediately successful at the time or not, argued the presence of principles and resolution which it were hopeless to expect to put down.

Viewing the case historically, it is hardly necessary to appeal to the services which Presbyterian Churches have rendered, in different countries of Europe, to the cause of religious, and so of civil freedom. Who can be ignorant of the struggles for liberty or independence, often and largely at the price of blood, which were waged by the Presbyterians of Piedmont, Switzerland, Holland, France, Germany, Scotland, &c.? Had it not been for

these—had the public mind not been roused upon a question which involved the dearest interests, in all probability Popery would have been re-established universally, and with it the civil despotism. Hence it is apparent, that Christian men, who are often by philosophers denounced as enthusiasts and fanatics, were the real parties, and not secular politicians, who wrought out the liberties of Europe. They are the only men who will persevere amid desperate sacrifices and hazards; and that candid men of the world occasionally acknowledge.

The only ground of hesitation which any can feel in awarding to evangelical Christians the title of the friends and martyrs of freedom, is the practice of persecution which has too frequently marked their proceedings. Some may think this invalidates their claim, but we humbly apprehend such an idea is a mistaken one. That the Reformers, and even leading men of the Church of a much later day, did not rightly, at least fully, understand the principles of religious toleration, may be readily conceded. Brought up in the persecuting school of the Church of Rome from the days of infancy, it would have been strange if remains of error had not clung to them, the more especially as their religious happened also to be their political opponents. It is granted that all the Protestant Churches and leading denominations proved intolerant where they had the power—the members of Prelatic, Presbyterian, and Congregational Churches. But we would be guilty of gross injustice to some, did we place all upon the same footing with the Church of Rome, or even of some Protestant communions. With few exceptions, Presbyterians can plead guiltless to bloody persecution. The religious wars of France were, on the part of the Protestants, self-defensive; and even the cruelties which took place in Holland were in part of the same character. It is a just boast of the Church of Scotland, that she never shed a drop of human blood; and the Presbyterians of England and Ireland can rejoice in the same satisfaction. To compare the doings of Presbyterians, then, with the Church of Rome, the murderer of many millions of lives, or even

with the sad proceedings of the Church of England in the South, and particularly in Scotland in the seventeenth century, would be to compare things which do not admit of any reasonable comparison. Contrast would be more appropriate. The English Presbyterians did, indeed, protest most solemnly against toleration and pretended liberty of conscience; but what sort of toleration? Toleration in the sense of encouragement to tenets and practices, many of them abominable, blasphemous, and destructive to society.* And with regard to the Scottish Presbyterians, though, smarting under the memory of intolerable wrongs, they may have occasionally treated the Episcopal clergy with hard usage; yet, that there was nothing worthy of the name of persecution, as it had been practised in their country, may be gathered from the following extracts from Episcopal writers themselves. Dr. Edwards, an eminent divine of the Church of England, at the period of the Union, said of the Church of Scotland, "They have with the patience of confessors and martyrs (and such a great number of them were) borne the sufferings which the High Churchmen brought upon them; and now, when they are able to retaliate, they study not revenge, but let the world see that they can forgive as well as suffer." This testimony was given when the religious troubles of Scotland had scarcely subsided. Similar is the statement of the present Scottish Episcopal Bishop of Glasgow, whose strong prejudices are not unknown. He acknowledges that the intolerance of the Presbyterian Church seldom proceeded beyond the theory of persecution, and except in civil war, was unstained with blood.† So far from being persecuted, two hundred of the Episcopal clergy, at the Revolution of 1688, were allowed to retain their parishes; and of those who were not comprehended, it is known that their wants were often relieved by their Presbyterian brethren; while those who had good opportunities of knowledge declare, that in the twenty-eight years of Prelatic persecution, they cannot remember to have heard of a case

* *Vide* Edwards' Gangrena, *passim;* also, Ferguson's Refutation.
† History, &c., ii. 320.

where the suffering Presbyterian clergy received relief from the clerical hands of Episcopacy. There is ample evidence that the sufferings of the Episcopalians at the Revolution were much exaggerated, and where real, were inflicted, not by the Presbyterian Church, but by lawless mobs.

Thus substantially cleared from the imputation of persecution, how pleasing to contemplate Presbyterianism as the friend of civil and religious freedom! The character originates in the true religion which she circulates, and there is nothing in her peculiarities at war with it. There is nought in the parity of ministers, or their free election by the communicants—in the office of ruling elder, and its popular mode of appointment—and in the power of appeal, in cases of discipline or advice, from court to court—unfavourable to true freedom, but the reverse. Hence the whole history of Scottish Presbyterianism is the history of freedom. When Presbytery was depressed, freedom languished; when it revived, freedom revived. Similar is the history of Ireland. One of the most gallant deeds in her history—the maintenance of Derry against the Popish forces, and with it the maintenance of the Protestant liberties of the country, if not of the three kingdoms—was the deed, in a chief degree, of Irish Presbyterians. The person who opened up the way to relief was a Presbyterian minister, and nine-tenths of the defenders belonged to the same religious denomination.

A similar spirit animated the Presbyterians of the United States. While devotedly loyal during the colonial era, *after* the declaration of independence they clung to the liberties of their country; their ministers were the first publicly to declare in behalf of the national independence; and they did so at no small hazard. In some cases their property was laid waste, their churches burnt down, their ministers murdered; still they vigorously and successfully contended for the honour of their country, and the rights of their countrymen. Nay, it is understood that a Presbyterian minister from Scotland (Witherspoon) not only rallied the friends of American

freedom at a most critical moment when misgiving was about to spoil all, but had a leading hand in the construction of the American constitution (he was for seven years a member of Congress)—a constitution which, whatever may be thought of it politically, every Christian must rejoice in, inasmuch as under it a great nation has grown up, destined, with the mother country, to spread the blessings of evangelical religion to the ends of the earth. Nor is it irrelevant here to remark, that the freedom, civil and religious, with which the United States have been blessed, and which they have been enabled hitherto to maintain, has been owing, in great measure, to the large amount of Presbyterianism which the country then embraced, and to which continual accessions have ever since been made. The ample infusion of Dutch, French, German, Irish, and Scottish Presbyterians, with their sound intelligence, industrious habits, moral and religious character, comprehending reverence for the Sabbath among the most important virtues, has doubtless communicated a steadiness to the frame of government which it would not otherwise have possessed—a stability which favourably contrasts with the unsteadiness of other republics, nominally under the same rule, but strangers to the same religious faith.

Adverting for a moment to other kinds of Church government, few, with the history of the world before them, will think Prelacy entitled to rank among the friends of freedom. In some countries, its injurious tendencies have been in a great measure repressed by a variety of causes; hence it has not prevented their freedom; but the natural operation is toward pride, ambition, usurped power, exclusiveness—in other words, selfish feelings, which lead to a disregard of what is due to others, and naturally terminate in harshness, if not persecution. In the fourth and fifth centuries, after Prelacy had begun to show itself in the Christian Church, how much real persecution was there! Where prelates did not persecute, how did they encourage the civil power to do so! In the after ages of the Papacy, what a fearful manifestation was there of intense selfish power, de-

structive of every thing like freedom, sacred or secular! In the Protestant Church of England, when was it that liberty was trampled on? Was it not when Prelacy, with its exclusive pretensions, was predominant, particularly in the reigns of James VI., Charles I., Charles II., and James VII.? And who was it that prostrated the liberties of Scotland for twenty-eight years, before one of the most atrocious tyrannies of modern times? Was it not the English and Scottish prelates combined? It is well known that the Episcopal clergy were the most violent abettors of the persecution of the evangelical Methodists, when they first appeared in England, during the last century. And it is not unknown that some of the leading men of the new Anglican school, at the present day, are already giving expression to sentiments respecting Church power essentially intolerant. Individual prelates, no doubt, may be referred to distinguished for their love of freedom; but these are exceptions to the rule. Liberty is no characteristic of the system. Even good men —good before—have been spoiled by the Prelates' robes.

With regard to Congregationalism, it puts forth high claims to liberty, and I have no hesitation in granting that where evangelical, there is nothing in the system inconsistent with freedom, and that its adherents have been warm advocates of liberty. But it has been a favourite idea with many in this body, that there is something in the Congregational system more favourable to sound views of toleration, and so of religious liberty, than in Prelacy or Presbytery. Along with this, it is generally contended that the Independents were the first in modern times to understand and practise toleration. Now, nothing can be more unfounded than such views. That the rule of Cromwell, who may be regarded as the representative of the Independents, was vastly more tolerant than that of his predecessor Charles I., or his successor Charles II.,—that, comparatively speaking, his usurpation was an oasis in the wilderness of persecution, may be true; but that there was no suffering on account of religious opinions under his iron sceptre, is far wide of the truth. The Episcopalians were not allowed to

use their liturgy under a penalty, and many of their ministers were hardly dealt with. The Presbyterians of Scotland, too, were not allowed freely to hold their Church courts: these were sometimes broken up by military; and we have seen that the Presbyterians of Ireland were exposed to banishment for loyalty to the monarch. It is well known, likewise, that the Independents who emigrated to America, visited, particularly upon the Quakers, the most cruel inflictions, even to death. Signatures, too, to an "Engagement," or covenant of the Independents in England in 1650, were as really enforced as ever were signatures to the Solemn League of the Presbyterians; while the fearful inflictions of a few years in America far exceeded, according to Dr. M'Crie, all that could be alleged of the Presbyterian Church of England or Scotland, from its foundation to the present day. *

The Congregationalists, then, have nothing in point of *practice* of which to boast over their Presbyterian

* Had this little work not already exceeded the limits which were originally intended, it would not be difficult to vindicate the Presbyterians from any serious charge of persecution in connection with the signing of the "Solemn League and Covenant," and kindred points. It could be shown, from the testimony of such men as Henderson, Dickson, Cant, and Lord Loudon, that parties were not forced to take the covenant, or punished for refusal; that any cases of this kind were rare and unauthorized; that the league was most cordially embraced, without any compulsion from Church or State, by the great body of the nation; and that any *undue* influence was chiefly employed *against* the covenant. It could be shown, also, from the exhortations of the Westminster Assembly, and the speeches of such members as Coleman, Caryl, Palmer, Thorowgood, &c., that they disapproved of the propagation of religion by force, and that it was mainly the seditio-political, and not the erroneous-religious, against which their exertions were directed, and which gave to their sentiments and proceedings the air of persecution. The case is correctly stated by "the Reformed Presbytery" in their Explanation and Defence of Terms of Communion in 1801. "If any otherwise peaceable and inoffensive subjects in Church and State, had religious scruples in their own mind, both the open doctrine and uniform practice of our pious ancestors recommended all possible tenderness in labouring to have them removed. But, on the other hand, when cruel Popish factions, under the fair pretence of only claiming a liberty to serve God in their own way, were plotting the utter ruin of both Church and State, and seeking the overthrow of all laws, human and divine, in such a case, indeed, they could not help thinking that salutary restraint and well-regulated coercion were indispensably necessary. And what nation under heaven, properly consulting her own safety and happiness in time of danger, would not find it advisable to act on the same great principle?"

brethren; and in regard to their earlier holding sound *theoretical* views of toleration and religious liberty, the same high historical authority shows that as correct sentiments were entertained from a much earlier date by the Reformers and first Puritans, who were Presbyterian, than by the Independents; that soon after the Reformation, the same views were common among the Presbyterians of Holland and France;* that it was not the principles of the Sectaries, but of the Reformers and their successors, which lay, and still lie, at the foundation of British freedom; that the writings of leading Independents at the period referred to betray decided symptoms of intolerance and persecution; and that it was the extravagant and most injurious proceedings of many of them which, by driving matters to extremities in England, created a reaction, lost all the immense advantages of a sound civil and ecclesiastical reformation, destroyed the monarch, and recalled persecution with its horrors and blood. While, then, the British Independents are acquitted of any serious persecution, it cannot be conceded to them that in this respect they are superior to their Presbyterian brethren, and much less that there was, or is, anything in their principles more favourable to true and scriptural freedom. For the historical proof of the latter points *vide* an admirable "Review of Orme's Life of Owen by Dr. M'Crie," republished in the volume of his "Miscellaneous Writings."—Edin. 1841.

Were it necessary to state anything farther in corroboration of the above views, we might appeal to the preface to the important work, "Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici," by the London Presbyterian ministers, where they ably vindicate themselves and the form of Church government to which they were attached, both in principle and practice, from the charge of "tyranniz-

* When the Scottish Episcopal clergy, after the Revolution of 1688, earnestly petitioned for a larger toleration than was considered safe to grant, they pleaded the case of Presbyterian Holland as an example of the safety and advantages of an unlimited toleration, proved by experience. It may be noticed, as at once a curious and interesting circumstance, indicative of the spirit of freedom, that the Presbyterian Puritans of England were the first to abolish the use of torture in judicial cases. (*Edinburgh Review.* 1828.)

ing over any." We might appeal to the fact that the Independents did not press for religious toleration till they saw that the Presbyterians were about to be established; in short, that there was no enlightened principle in their toleration, such as it was, but the factious desire to disappoint a rival—while their specious conduct was one of the influential causes in the restoration of the civil and religious despotism of the Stuarts. But we prefer to allow Richard Baxter, who lived among them and knew their sentiments well, to describe their character. "The poor Church of Christ," says he, "the sober, sound, religious part, are like Christ that was crucified between two malefactors. The profane and formal persecutors on the one hand, and *the fanatic dividing sectaries on the other*, have in all ages been grinding the spiritual seed as the corn is ground between the millstones; and, though their sins have ruined themselves and us, *and silenced so many hundreds of ministers, and scattered the flocks, and made us the hatred and scorn of the ungodly world, and a by-word and a desolation on the earth*, yet there are few of them that lament their sin," &c., &c. Is it possible to suppose that these men were the first discoverers of toleration, and the *genuine* friends of freedom, civil or religious—the calumniators and enemies of the most faithful servants of God—of such men as Baxter, the apostle of peace and union? The sectaries, indeed, have got credit with various historical writers for being the first in British history to understand the principles of liberty, but the more the claim is examined, the less will the reader be disposed to allow it. From accidental circumstances, their name has come to be associated with the sacred cause; but this is all. They were the instructors of Locke, the first great philosophical writer on toleration. It is a hasty inference, however, to conclude that it was from them exclusively he derived his enlarged views of freedom. His first Letter on toleration, which is considered by many the most able and original of his writings, was composed not among the Independents of England, but among the Presbyterians of Holland—a country where full religious toleration had been in exercise for generations.

CHAPTER VII.

PRESBYTERIANISM FAVOURABLE TO CATHOLIC VIEWS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

The quality of character here pointed at may be regarded as involved in those which precede. If Presbytery be favourable to the maintenance of sound doctrine, knowledge, and freedom, it naturally allies itself with enlarged views of the Christian Church, at least narrow views of it are inconsistent with these. But the subject at the present day is so important, that it deserves a separate notice. I do not charge individual Christians, and far less Churches, holding the opposite forms of Church government, the Congregational and Prelatic, with bigotry or uncharitableness. There may be countervailing influences, and multitudes of the actual members in both cases, it is well known, are distinguished for as enlarged views and warm-hearted liberality as any Presbyterian can lay claim to; but reasoning on the tendencies of religious systems—tendencies, too, whose operation is borne out by facts—we believe it admits of proof that Presbytery as a whole, and Presbyterian Churches in point of fact, have proved more favourable to catholicity than the opposite forms of ecclesiastical organization. Presbyterian Churches have often been charged with an exclusive and bigoted spirit, and we are far from denying their culpability in this respect. Where they have consisted of small bodies, maintaining the character of protesters testifying against the failures and sins of

others, there is no small danger of the indulgence of such a spirit, while the very completeness of their organization and the publicity of their proceedings tend to force that spirit upon public observation. Such a position as that referred to has very frequently been the position of Presbytery. It is the attitude of not a few Presbyterian Churches at the present day, as it has been for generations. In these circumstances, it is not wonderful that many have come to associate illiberality with Presbytery,though the associationis accidental, and much more due to other bodies, which, however, owing to less prominency of position, have escaped the imputation.

That Presbytery is propitious to enlarged views of the Church of Christ, is, we humbly apprehend, undeniable. The members of the Church are taught to look beyond their individual congregation—they are taught that they form part of a great whole, consisting of many congregations. Representatives of this large visible Church regularly assemble from the most distant parts of the country, for the management of its business, in the sight of the members. These representatives, taken as a whole, are little, if at all, raised in rank above the members; hence there is no interruption to full sympathy. They are also so numerous as to furnish a fair idea to the mind of the collective Church. Can any one doubt that such a system as this is far more favourable to catholic views of the Church of Christ in general, than a Church consisting of a number of individual congregations without any tie to, or necessary knowledge of, each other? How great must be the *tendency* in these cases to limit the view and interest to one's own congregation, as if it were the only Church, and so to nurse a narrow and exclusive spirit! There is no tendency in the system to carry the Christian out of the congregation in which he worships—there are no regular courts of representatives from a distance to remind him of the unity as well as the extent of the Church. He may, and often is, a large-minded Christian notwithstanding; but it is not in consequence of the organization with which he is associated, but in spite of it. So in regard to Prelacy. Here there

may be a sufficiently expanded and at the same time united body, but the union is not visible nor frequently and impressively exhibited. Twenty-six bishops spread over such a country as England—not seen by the people as Church rulers more frequently than once in three years —often at far greater intervals—removed also above the great mass of the people in rank—associated in the public eye chiefly with temporal peers, transacting secular business—can give the members of the Church of England a very faint idea of the unity of the Church of Christ. Even in the most favourable circumstances, though the rulers stood on the same footing with their brethren of the Scottish Prelacy, no one could allege that the relationship of member and governor was such as to encourage the feelings of expansion and catholicity. In point of fact, there is great isolation in the congregations of the Episcopal Church; the ministers are to a large extent practically Independents. Neither they nor their flocks could draw from the organization in which they stand the ideas and impressions of a universal Church. There is a want of close and intimate connection between governor and governed, congregation and congregation. Now, it is from enlarged views of the particular Church with which men are connected that their minds naturally expand to other Churches, till they are able to take in the idea of the holy Church Catholic. We hold that here Presbytery has a decided advantage. From its very constitution, easily and without effort, it trains men to large views of the Church of Christ.

And the facts of history seem to bear out these reasonings of principle. There is a wonderful and delightful harmony in the Confessions of Faith of the Churches of the Reformation on the subject of the Church visible and universal. Substantially they speak the same language. The predominant party in the Church of England and Ireland might well be referred to the 19th article of their own Church, the Irish brethren to the 13th chapter of the Confession drawn up by Ussher —they could not find a stronger condemnation of their prevailing spirit, nor a clearer testimony to the univer-

sality of the Church of Christ. But however correct and excellent, these are short and general compared with the statements of Presbyterian Churches on the same subject. In the Confessions of Switzerland, Bohemia, France, Belgium, Saxony, Scotland, there are a fulness and a strength which we do not meet with in the Confessions of Prelacy, though the sentiments be the same. One feels, in reading them, that the view of catholicity had a firmer, or at least a warmer, hold on the minds of the Presbyterian than of the Prelatic Reformers. And when we descend to subsequent times, the proof in this respect of superiority becomes more visible.

It is well known, that from the days of Archbishop Laud, in the middle of the seventeenth century, downwards to the present time, there has always been a powerful party in the Church of England, and now so numerous and influential as to be well-nigh supreme, who make Prelacy essential to the being of the Church of Christ. The natural and the necessary inference from this, whether men have the courage to draw it or not, is, that there is no salvation beyond the pale of Prelatic organization. The immediate effect of this, again, of course, is to create and cherish the most narrow, illiberal, and God-dishonouring views of the Church of Christ. For many years there has been a corresponding and growing party in the American Episcopal Church, not less exclusive; while there is reason to fear that the small Episcopal Church of Scotland is not free from a large admixture of the same spirit. However we attempt to explain it, the fact is indubitable, that in Scotland, England, and America, (we may add the British Colonies), Prelacy is found in combination with the most narrow and bigoted views of the Church of Christ—views not only at war with the Word of God, but the professed standards of the parties themselves. Surely this indicates no small strength of error. To say the least, there can be nothing in Prelacy to counteract bigotry. But there is more than this; it seems impossible to explain the universality of the experience, in circumstances so different, upon any other supposition than that Prelacy in itself is an active propa-

gator of the narrow and anti-Christian views to which we refer—that there is a congeniality between the system and the fruit. Individual Presbyterians, and even small Presbyterian Churches, may for a time have practically indulged in very contracted and unworthy notions of the Church of Christ. But when was it ever heard that large bodies of Presbyterians, almost entire Churches, as matter of doctrinal faith, put Prelatists and Congregationalists beyond the pale of Christianity, or even made the least approach to such a spirit and proceedings? and yet these are familiar on the part of Prelatists, as the writings of leading men on both sides of the Atlantic amply testify.

In regard to Congregationalism, it is no more than justice to say, that while the absence of Confessions of Faith in Independent Churches prevents us appealing in the same certain manner to the professed views of the body on the subject of the Church of Christ, there is no reason to believe that any of them entertain ideas so repulsive and extravagant as those of modern Prelacy. Many of them may hold very narrow views of Church fellowship, and the tendency of their organization may be to isolation and exclusiveness in their general ideas of the Church of Christ; but it would be doing a manifest injustice to the large and excellent body of evangelical Congregationalists, both in Britain and America, to class, or even seem to class, them for a moment with the advocates of High Church and pretended apostolic succession. They can have little in common.

While the standards of Presbyterian Churches bear witness to enlarged and catholic views of the Church of Christ, we think that the facts of their history are in a main degree in harmony with their professed creed. Of course we speak of Churches only while they retain their evangelical character. It is difficult to quote evidence on such a subject; but in addition to the fact that the Westminster Confession of Faith—subscribed by most Presbyterian Churches both in this country and the United States—does not unchurch non-Presbyterians, does not maintain that the ministry consists only of in-

dividuals holding Presbyterian ordination, and draws a clear distinction between the Presbyterian Church and the Church universal—limiting the expression that there is no salvation out of the Church to the latter; contending, in short, for some government as essential to the Church of Christ, but not restricting it to Presbytery. In addition to these general grounds, we have such a testimony to the Church of England from the commissioners of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, assembled in London in 1644, as the following. Speaking of the Church of England at the Reformation and subsequently they say: "We do, upon very good reasons, judge the Church of England in the midst of her ceremonies to have been a true Church; and the ministry thereof, notwithstanding the many blemishes and corruptions cleaving unto it, to have been a true ministry; and shall never deny unto them that praise, whether in debating controversies with Papists, or in practical divinity for private Christians, which they do most justly deserve. Upon the other part, we are neither so ignorant nor so arrogant to ascribe to the Church of Scotland such absolute purity and perfection as hath not need, or cannot admit of, further reformation; yet that there is a wide difference between the one and the other, acknowledged also in the common covenant, we bring two famous witnesses from the Church of England to prove," viz., Brightman and Cartwright. When it is remembered what was the relation in which the Presbyterian Church stood at that time to the Church of England—how much the former had suffered, and were about to suffer, from the friends of the latter, the testimony is the more remarkable. It is sufficient to show that the Scottish Church, even in the days of the covenant, was not that exclusive and illiberal body which many of the ill-informed imagine. In the same spirit Robert Baillie, one of the commissioners, in his book against Archbishop Laud, says: "With the English Church we have nought to do, but as with our most dear and nearest sister. We wish them all happiness, and that not only they, but all other Christian Churches,

this day were both almost and altogether such as we are, except our afflictions. We have no enemies there but the Canterbury faction, no less heavy to her than to us." (*Ladensium*, &c., p. 97.) Surely there is nothing here of the illiberal and the bigoted. And if we pass from England to Scotland, in the very midst of the Prelatic persecution, we hear a leading minister of the Church of Scotland (Kirkton) speaking of the usurpers who had seized the places of the ejected ministers, exclaim, "God forbid that I should say the Lord had no interest among them."

Coming down to our own day, and appealing to the spirit of the Presbyterian Church with which I am best acquainted, I might well ask whether the Free Church of Scotland be exclusive or illiberal? From the peculiar circumstances in the providence of God in which she has been placed, the peculiar testimony which she has been called upon to bear, she may have been exposed in some quarters to the imputation of uncharitableness. But what Church has shown a more cordial welcome to other Churches? Not only on the Bicentenary celebration of the Westminster Assembly was there a kindly interchange of Christian sentiment and feeling among bodies which had long been separate, but from year to year leading ministers of Foreign Churches occupy a prominent place at the meetings of her General Assembly, and receive the most cordial proofs of co-operation Regular correspondence is kept up by her with Christians abroad, while the recent movement in behalf of greater union among all evangelical Christians, was it not originated by, at least largely indebted for its impulse to, her energy? This augurs the more, as she is naturally and justly jealous of any union which would obscure the peculiar testimony which she has been called to bear before the Churches and kingdoms of Christendom. If suspicion and alienation prevail in any quarter, it may be safely said that they do not lie with her; and yet it would not have been strange, if, smarting from injustice and reproach, she had stood aloof from others. It is not only with Presbyterians that she readily

co-operates:—the Wesleyan Methodists, differing from her to some extent in doctrine as well as ecclesiastical government, find in her a warm friend, and affectionately reciprocate the regard. Can more, yea, can as much, be alleged of Prelacy and Independency towards other bodies, surveying their history and present relations as a whole? It is plain, then, that the tendencies of Presbytery are towards catholic views of the Church of Christ; and in an age when narrow Popish views are rapidly reviving, how important is it that we should be able to make this statement!

CHAPTER VIII.

PRESBYTERIANISM FAVOURABLE TO THE MAINTENANCE OF SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES AND PRIVILEGES IN PEACEFUL AND ADVERSE TIMES.

It is a high recommendation of any system, whether civil or ecclesiastical, that it is strong in its self-preserving and self-diffusing power. What avails it that a system be good, if it be destined soon to decay, from the absence of the principle of perpetuation? The more excellent it is, in these circumstances its weakness is the more to be regretted. Now, happily, such is not the character of Presbyterianism. It is armed with the principle of self-preservation, and hence is able to maintain and diffuse whatever good qualities it possesses, even in unpropitious times.

1. With regard to times of peace, it provides, in its very constitution, for a warm sympathy, wise consultation, and successful co-operation, among the office-bearers of the Church. All know how much is gained in the conduct of important business, by a number of intelligent men meeting together—consulting—throwing out suggestions—comparing their ideas, and joining in the execution of the same plans. In this way, many good hints are given and received—incipient misapprehensions corrected, and evils prevented. Thus, too, younger and inexperienced men are encouraged by older; and, where it is necessary to do what may be delicate or unwelcome, the fact of a number doing

it together, takes off the difficulty from individuals. Hence duty is discharged to the Church and to society, which probably would otherwise be left undone. These are great advantages in connection with Presbyterian Church courts, which can scarcely be appreciated by those who have not experienced them. They indeed serve to strengthen the hands and encourage the heart. How different the case of the man, probably a young pastor, who is left, in addition to all the natural difficulties of his office, to struggle with many adversities, without an official friend with whom to confer, or from whom to obtain sympathy and aid!

Then there is the diffusive power of Presbytery. Education, missions, and other plans of spiritual good, are wrought out through the medium of the Church herself. It is not necessary to form general associations, composed of individuals who are friendly, of different denominations, imperfectly known to each other, and without any well-defined and satisfactory principles of union. No; the work naturally falls into the hands of the Church courts, as the representatives and organs of the whole body of members. This is the scriptural mode; not, of course, excluding others where, from particular circumstances, it is unattainable. A richer blessing may therefore be expected to attend it; and, moreover, it is a way safe from a variety of dangers to which any other is exposed. Thus there is a provision in the very constitution of Presbyterianism for its perpetuity, and, with it, the truth of God, with all its unspeakable blessings. Is it not an evil, when, before a Church can proceed to the discharge of the plainest and most imperative duty—that of the propagation of the Gospel—it is necessary to go out of the Church herself, and to get up some extraneous machinery, which the parties themselves do not believe to be recognised in the Word? So much for the working of Presbytery in peaceful times.

2. With regard to times of trial and danger—such times as all Churches may sooner or later expect in one form or another—how admirable is the defensive armour

which Presbyterianism throws around the truth of God, and all the principles and constitution of the Christian Church! In such cases, with the Divine blessing, safety and success depend upon promptitude and union of operation. Without these all other means are vain. Now Presbytery beautifully provides for them. Many are apt to imagine, that, whatever may be the good qualities of this form of Church government in resisting aggression, promptitude is not in the number. Now, under reluctant or bad management, this may often have been the case; but, in its own nature, there is nothing inconsistent with rapid decision and action. Take the constitution of the Church of Scotland, in connection with a recent question, as an illustration. A few years ago, the Church felt it to be her duty to resist a proposed bill for the reform of the Universities, which she believed would have been destructive to their true character, and, through them, injurious to the Church. Extraordinary meetings of Presbyteries and Synods, and of the Commission of the General Assembly, on a few days' notice, were called. The question was discussed—the evils of the proposed measure powerfully exposed; the result was, that the bill was withdrawn by the Government. The truth is, that nothing can be more flexible than the constitution of the Church of Scotland. Of late years, previous to the Disruption, every regular meeting of the Commission was attended. This may be said to bring the supreme court into play four times a-year. Besides, by a requisition to the moderator, it may be called at any time on a few days' intimation. In this way the supreme power is ever ready to act. What more could be wished in the form of defence?

Nor is promptitude of movement all. There is what is not less essential, union—united resistance. It is, not only a great advantage to a Church to be spread over a whole country, so that every part can be touched at once; it is still more important that the ministers and elders are united together in presbyterial courts, and these again in synods, so that there is an extensive

organization, not hurriedly got up for the occasion, but standing as a fixed and regular part of the ecclesiastical machinery, ever ready to be called into play on a few hours' notice. It is not easy to estimate the advantage which this gives for defence. Suppose that any aggression were made upon the constitution of Prelatical or Congregational Churches: they might be trodden down, at least seriously damaged, before they could muster strength to explain their cause to the public, and defend themselves. An extensive organization would need to be prepared, and this demands time: even where it exists, there might be a want of understanding with, and confidence in, the members. The movement, too, might be open to many misunderstandings and misrepresentations. These evils are prevented by regular Church courts. The defence comes naturally, and it is immediate. It proceeds from a variety of quarters at once. It is also effective, because the parties fully understand each other. Through the organs of the public press, too, they enjoy a ready and ascertained mode of communicating with the community. It was remarked in a recent controversy, in which the Church of England felt a deep interest—in which, indeed, her very existence as an Establishment was at stake—that she was never able to gather up and present her strength. The ministers of one diocese might be anxious to act, but they were repressed by the coldness or want of organization in the adjoining diocese. Hence nothing was done by either. Meantime temporary advantages were gained by their assailants from acting on Presbyterian organization; this forming, however, no part of the fixed constitution of their Churches, gradually fell away. It is doubtless owing in part to this superior Presbyterian organization, that any petitions to Parliament from this country, on great public questions, of late years have, proportionally, so far surpassed those of the Church of England.

Thus it is apparent that Presbytery is favourable to the maintenance of scriptural principles, and the diffusion of divine truth, generally, in times of trouble and

danger, as well as in days of peace. Any organization which other Churches may get up for the accomplishment of their objects, is but an approximation to the Presbyterian—at best defective, and ever ready to fall away. Their very creation is a testimony to the advantages of Presbyterian Church government. The success of the struggles of the past was more owing to its presence than many are perhaps aware; and the struggles of the future, if successful, will, in all likelihood, be indebted, under God, to the same cause. Such being the case, let all who have influence seek to purify and strengthen the courts of the Presbyterian Church yet more and more. Let them see to their right constitution in the mode of appointment of office-bearers; let them see that there is a full complement of office-bearers—that these make it a matter of conscience regularly to attend and to take their share in the responsibility; and lastly, let it be matter of care that office-bearers conduct the business in such a spirit of wisdom and meekness, as well as freedom and fidelity, that none of that large class in all communities who are determined in their judgment of the good or evil of a system by the conduct of its administrators, may have any occasion to find fault with Presbytery, but rather to commend and to rejoice in it.

To escape, if possible, from the imputation of partisanship in dealing with the delicacies involved in this chapter, I am glad to have it in my power to appeal to a witness who, from his known attachment to Episcopacy, will be regarded as sufficiently impartial when pointing out its known and felt defects. The *London Record*, which, perhaps more than any other religious paper, may be considered as well acquainted with the character of the evangelical party in the Church of England, laments, under date 12th December 1845, the timidity of the evangelical clergy of that Church; and this as the *effect of the system* of which they form a part. The editor speaks of the sad failure of all their efforts against the evils and dangers of the times, attributes it to a great deficiency of courage, and that again to the

position of the ministry being extremely unfavourable to united and energetic action. He then goes on to say: "The Episcopal form of government exercises unseen an influence over the whole clerical body, perfectly withering to independent and energetic action." After referring to what "Presbyterianism had developed with prodigious energy in the Free Church in Scotland," he adds, "Our forces, though nominally united and apparently serving under one banner, possess no power of effective action against the master mischief of the age." "The feebleness, and consequent incapacity to encounter with success the torrent of evil, is mainly to be traced to our Episcopal form of government, and very prominently to the unscriptural influence which the bishops and higher dignitaries of the Church exercise over the clergy at large. It is held by multitudes of the evangelical clergy as a duty (which is absolutely fatal to united and energetic action) of going as far with the views and wishes of their bishop as they possibly can, instead of embracing and acting on an enlarged view of what the circumstances of the Church require."

Without meaning to reflect for a moment on the character of men, as a body, so estimable and laborious, it is plain that they are the victims of their position; that, from the power of circumstances, the result must substantially be what the *Record* describes. Nor is it limited to the adherents of Episcopacy. Where the free Church courts of Presbytery are abandoned, and Presbyterian ministers practically become Independents, experience proclaims that they lose the public spirit, and energy, and united action for which their fathers were distinguished. The intelligent student of Church history can mark a loss of public spirit in the Presbyterian Churches of France and Switzerland, when they lost their public courts. The comparative narrowness of spirit and timidity of action in Presbyterian ministers on the Continent, otherwise estimable, at the present time, may be traced back to the same unhappy cause.

Let it not be supposed that there is any peculiarity in the English soil or the English mind. It is the ecclesi-

astical system which, in the course of one or two generations, imperceptibly but surely operating, moulds the general character, and assimilates those who are under its dominion to its own likeness. Presbytery had once its hold in England as well as in Scotland, and had it been favoured with but fair play for a few years, no one can tell how different might have been the condition and prospects of that country at the present day from what they are. It may seem like idle Presbyterian predilection, but as matter of serious belief we cordially adopt the sentiment of a much-respected brother, well qualified, from position as well as knowledge, to judge, when he says: "While we rejoice unfeignedly in the successful labours of Christian ministers in other communions, we will not disguise our belief, that nothing can so effectually meet the present crisis in English Christianity as a revival of the Presbyterian polity and the Presbyterian pastorate—*that polity and pastorate which in ten years did more to render England a religious people than all the discursive efforts of different denominations since.*"*

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CHAPTER IX.

THE FAVOURABLE OPERATION OF PRESBYTERIANISM ILLUSTRATED IN THE FREE CHURCH MOVEMENT OF SCOTLAND.

During the five years which have elapsed since the publication of the former edition of this little work, there has been marked changes in Christendom respecting Church government, especially as regards Prelacy and Presbytery. The Prelacy of the Church of Rome has become more organized and active, and so far as the State would allow, similar progress has characterized the Prelacy of the Church of England, both at home and in the colonies. It is true, that in reference to the latter, there has been no improvement in real discipline. Mr. Ward retained his fellowship three years unchallenged, he himself tells us, after publicly declaring that he renounced no one Romish doctrine in subscribing the articles of the Church of England; Dr. Pusey, after all that has passed, continues to preach sermons which are publicly described as "Popery all over" with the most perfect impunity; and a curate at Leamington, for well-nigh reviving the confessional, was simply told by the diocesan, that he withdrew his liberty to labour in his diocese, and that he hoped he would use more discretion in the next diocese to which he might repair! Though, however, there be no improvement in the government of the Church of England, it is quickened in its existing powers, and particularly against evangelical religion. As

Prelacy has become more active, so has Presbytery; indeed the one movement naturally leads to the other. Without meaning the smallest disparagement to other forms of ecclesiastical rule, we believe it may be affirmed with truth, that Prelacy and Presbytery are the most natural antagonists, and that the rise of Prelatic Popery and High Churchism in England and elsewhere in these latter days, is likely to lead to the revival of Presbyterianism, as the most suitable opponent. Many who are non-Presbyterian give credit to Presbytery as the best form of government for warring with adverse civil power, and imagine that it drew its origin from such a necessity in the days of the Reformation. But, not to suggest that much of the enmity to the truth and kingdom of Christ down to the end is represented in the book of prophecy as proceeding from the rulers of this world, it may be remarked, that if Presbyterian organization be a favourable one for meeting the combined array of hostile civil governments, for the same reason it must be well fitted for maintaining the truth against the organization of Prelacy, whether Popish or semi-Popish. These opponents require to be met by easy combination and general and instantaneous action, as well as the others; and surely much more of these is to be found in united Presbytery than in isolated Congregationalism.

We know not whether it be owing to any felt necessity of this kind, but, as compared with Congregationalism, there has of late years been a decided revival of the principles of Presbytery. The symptoms of this revival may be traced, not only in the publication of various important works, but in the improved strength and spirit of not a few Presbyterian bodies, and in the growing adoption, if not in words, yet in proceedings, of Presbyterian principles by other bodies. Looking abroad, we find the Free Church of the Canton de Vaud in the act of organizing on thorough Presbyterian principles. The Protestant Church of Prussia, also, in anxious deliberation about an organization which shall bring her still nearer to the Presbyterian model. Among the evangelical ministers of Belgium and France,

whether connected with the National Church or not, we find earnest inquiries and discussions about a right system of Presbyterian Church government as loudly called for by their necessities. We find the Presbyterian Church of England so revived as to count six presbyteries with numerous congregations, and surrounded with applications for ministers which, at present, she cannot meet. Meanwhile, she has for the first time started a theological college, in favourable circumstances, and with promising prospects. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, during the last five years, as we had occa sion to notice, has made decided progress. In Scotland, again, there has been the Free Church movement, which is thoroughly Presbyterian in its organization and spirit. Before alluding to it a little more particularly, it may be noticed, in connection with the Free Church at home, that there has been Presbyterian progress in the colonies, and especially in Canada. During the last few years, the congregations of both have increased at once in numbers and spirit. In Scotland, two important Presbyterian Churches have incorporated. Besides traces of direct revival, other bodies, non-Presbyterian, have, in a season of trial, been constrained to act upon Presbyterian principles. When heresy lately appeared in Congregational Churches in Scotland, the sound called the unsound to account, tried them by an implied Confession of Faith, and separated them from their fellowship; thus practically acting upon principles inconsistent with strict Independency, but fully recognised and daily acted upon by Presbytery. In England, again, the leading and most influential organ of Congregationalism has more than once declared that the Independency for which it contends is not extreme; that it would be well satisfied to see such a connection among the Churches as to regulate the ordination, translation, and deposition of pastors; apart from which a general sustentation fund for the gospel ministry—an object not only desirable, but in these days of advancing Popery urgently needful—is believed to be impracticable. Here, again, is a substantial recognition of Presbyterian organization.

But, we turn to the Free Church movement in Scotland, as eminently illustrative of the successful operation of Presbytery. Whatever injury Presbyterianism as connected with the Establishment may have sustained, has been far more than counterbalanced by the display of Presbyterian principles in this separate body. Nay, that display has held up Presbytery in general, before the Christian world, and proclaimed its advantages in a manner almost unknown before, certainly unknown to the present generation. "The Disruption of the Scottish Church," remarked a friend from America, "was a proud day for Presbytery;" and if the fidelity and sacrifices of that day were recommendatory of the form of Church government under which the office-bearers and members had been trained, the preparation which preceded and the proceedings which have followed, bear a similar attestation. It was not the Presbyterian government of the Church of Scotland which led to its Disruption in 1843. Ignorant and prejudiced men may allege this; but, in truth, the event was owing to civil courts invading an old scriptural and civilly recognised constitution; and the legislature of the land, instead of staying the invasion, giving to it the seal of their sanction. The Presbyterian organization, instead of creating, delayed the crisis, and gave public men full time for reconsideration. It afforded facilities for everything being done which could possibly be done by combination and mutual representation to prevent the event; and when, in the mysterious providence of God, the event could be kept back no longer, the Presbyterian organization of the Church furnished the most admirable preparation for it. Though, for a short time before the Disruption the preparation was withdrawn from the Church courts where men were divided in opinion, still these courts continued to afford means of public explanation and discussion which were highly beneficial to the friends of the cause throughout the land; and the knowledge which ministers and elders had of each other, as members of the same Church courts, prepared them to act as one man when the day of trial came. Familiar with meet-

ings and business, accustomed to confide in each other and in leading men, readily communicating with every part of the land, they could concentrate their whole efforts at one moment. Under God, it was owing in a large measure to their previous Presbyterian knowledge and training, that ministers and elders were fitted for the high duties to which they were called.

And what had been so useful *before* did not prove less serviceable *at* the moment of movement. The Presbyterian organization was immediately called into play. Members of the different synods from the four quarters of Scotland, then present in Edinburgh, were asked to meet according to their synods and make provision for religious worship in their respective districts. This was promptly done, and ere a few days had elapsed the ministers who withdrew from the Establishment, with the addition of probationers, had already their former or new spheres of labour, and the Church, as a whole, went forward as peacefully as if there had been no Disruption. The order and ease with which from 800,000 to 1,000,000 of people separated themselves from connection with the State, and that in many cases in spite of intimidation, is one of the most memorable events of modern history, and should prove a great encouragement to all conscientious men called to take a similar course.

And as Presbytery conduced largely to the success of the event itself, so it formed a powerful help in all subsequent proceedings. The principles of Presbyterianism were severely tried; but being the principles of the Word of God, they stood the trial. A vast body of men had to be elected to office in the Church—ministers, elders, deacons; but though the electors were generally new to the duties, such is the happy action of Presbytery, where truly free, and animated by an evangelical spirit, that not a single case of disputed election has come before the superior Church court. The unanimity here, as in other departments, was universal; and yet it was not blind, as occasional discussions served to show.

The usual impression in regard to Presbyterian Church government, especially in quiet times, is, that it is slow

and unelastic, that great evils are completed before the counteracting machinery can be brought to bear upon them. But the history of the Scottish Disruption has shown that there is no inconsistency in Presbytery between the greatest activity and the greatest strength—that the utmost flexibility is quite compatible with combined and unbroken energy. It may be safely said that no Prelacy, in the exercise of the most instantaneous authority, has ever surpassed the rapidity and elasticity of the Presbyterian movement. The Free Church was like an army of high discipline, dealing in easy and united action.

To estimate the relative advantages of different forms of Church government, let the reader consider how Prelacy and Independency would probably have wrought in the same circumstances. Disruptions are like storms which try the capabilities of vessels. It is true that Prelacy and Independency have had little to do with disruptions—that these are almost appropriate to Presbytery. But suppose Prelacy were forced by conscience to contemplate such an event, how serious would be her disadvantages! Many would be puzzled by the primary difficulty, how they could act, suppose no prelate came out. Supposing this got over, what difficulties, from unacquaintance one with another, with business, with government, with the management of meetings! what difficulties from the absence of confidence in themselves or each other, from jealousy of individuals, or from habits of hitherto unthinking submission! There can be little question that difficulties of the nature referred to, palsy not a few excellent ministers of the Church of England, and prevent them seeing clearly the line of duty at the present moment.

With regard, again, to Congregationalism, it is still more difficult to fancy a separation from the State, inasmuch as the absence of Confessions of Faith in principle, and the very nature of the ecclesiastical government, would almost prevent the possibility of union between Church and State. But, supposing such an event to take place, and to be followed by disruption,

in addition to several of the difficulties already stated, there would be the great difficulty of the absence of common counsel and co-operation in such an authoritative manner as to secure immediate and universal action; and, besides, there would be the hazard of jealousy—of one congregation thinking that another was taking too much upon it, and impairing the rule of strict Independency.

It is easy, then, to see what advantages the previous Presbyterian education and habits of the office-bearers and members of the Free Church must have furnished for the events of 1843 and subsequent years. But if the principles of Presbytery be thus useful for great emergencies, is it to be supposed that they are prejudicial or useless in the ordinary business of the Church of Christ in peaceful times? Surely not. Besides, the day in which we live is not a day of peace, but of warfare, if not with civil rulers, with an ecclesiastical enemy, who has often proved too powerful for States—we mean the Papal Antichrist. And surely the same qualities, habits, and organization, which were so needful for the one conflict, are not less necessary for a sustained and successful warfare in the other.

The distinctions in behalf of Presbytery to which we have alluded are not matters of mere reasoning or speculation. So recently as last year, the great majority of the faithful ministry of the Canton de Vaud felt themselves constrained to withdraw from communion with the Church of the State. Apart from the fierce persecution which they had been called to endure, what was the great barrier to the success of their movement at first, and its progress afterwards? We have their own repeated testimony for saying, that the great loss was the absence of ruling elders—an essential part of the Presbyterian system. The ministers, unaccustomed to almost any work save the pastoral, were left standing alone in the storm, like faithful presbyters of a Prelatic Church, when they ought to have been surrounded with vigorous auxiliaries. The pleasing prospect of stability and progress which now opens up before them in the midst of oppression, is drawn from the grow-

ing Presbyterian organization which they are enabled to set up, and which they hope to be able to maintain.

Presbytery, indeed, has its trials—we do not call them disadvantages. In the popular constitution of its courts, it is liable to the annoyance of an injudicious mind, forcing on an unsuitable subject of discussion in an unseasonable way. But this trial is inseparable from freedom, whether civil or religious, and it is more apparent than real. Truth in the end does not suffer by discussion. It is better to allow extreme views and feelings to be expressed, and immediately met by just views, than, by suppression, to allow them to fester into a secret sore. Moreover, Presbyterian government, while it takes for granted, and requires that men be judicious, naturally educates them to this temper. There can be little doubt that the great Head of the Church designed all the gifts and powers of his servants to be exercised; and the administration of the government of his Church is one of the means of drawing these forth.

That it may not be imagined the views of this chapter, in commendation of Presbytery, are the warm impressions of a partisan, I beg to appeal to the testimony of an able and impartial witness. Bishop Hughes, Roman Catholic prelate of America, in his "Discussion" with the Rev. Dr. Breckenridge of Baltimore, a minister of the Presbyterian Church, speaking of the General Assembly of that Church, says: "I must say, with every man acquainted with the mode in which it is organized, that, for the purposes of popular and political government, its structure is little inferior to that of the Congress itself. In any emergency which may arise, the General Assembly can produce a uniformity among its adherents to the farthest boundaries of the land. It acts on the principle of a radiating centre, and is without an equal or a rival among the other denominations in the country." (P. 86.) Of course, a Presbyterian contends for a General Assembly upon a far higher principle; but the *fact* of its capacity and power, as attested by an intelligent Romanist, is worth noticing. With regard, again, to the actual result of Presbyterian organization in Scotland during the late

eventful years, there is no one whose authority is so unexceptionable as that of a distinguished leader, and all the more that the testimony is given, not in self-praise, or in praise of the Free Church, but when modestly repelling injurious misrepresentations. The Rev. Dr. Candlish, in his Letters to the Rev. Mr. Elliott, says: "We have made no change in our constitution or manner of acting. We have continued to transact the business of the Church, both its domestic and its missionary business, precisely as we were doing before. The Disruption did not cause the very slightest interregnum or interval of anarchy—no, not the interruption of a single hour; and ever since that event the regular and orderly course of the administration of ecclesiastical affairs has been unbroken." (P. 20.) It is unnecessary to quote testimonies to the marvellous attainments of various kinds which have been achieved. Prelatists, and Congregationalists, and Wesleyans, have alike borne warm attestation to them, and urged the example of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland upon the members of their own communions.

From the whole, it is apparent that during the last five years not only has nothing occurred, whether in Scotland or elsewhere, disparaging to the cause of Presbytery (the enslaving of the Presbyterian Establishment by the civil power excepted), but that much has occurred indicative of reviving interest and strength in its behalf, both at home and abroad;—in short, that Presbytery seems to be burnishing its old armour, and preparing for the conflict with Popery in its most formidable retreats.

APPENDIX.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE FATHERS IN BEHALF OF PRESBYTERY.

Perhaps Presbyterians should decline to argue the question of Church government or worship, or any other, on the ground of human authority. Holding the principles which they do, of the exclusive authority of the Word of God, they ought to refuse to meet their opponents on an inferior footing. This would be honouring to the Scriptures, and make a grand and visible line of distinction between Presbyterians and many of those who are ranged against their views. It would also be perfectly fair, and tend to correct the abuses which are connected with endless discussions about opinions which, before they can have any binding force, must themselves be tried and approved by the infallible standard of Heaven. The homage paid to the Fathers and Tradition is one of the causes of the revival of Popery in the Church of England, which cannot be too much condemned. In the present state of society, however, long accustomed to an opposite mode of procedure, the declinature would be misunderstood. It would be attributed to fear, and the advocates of rival forms of polity would triumph. Many, too, would mistake their vaunting for confessed victory. Hence Presbyterians, however reluctantly, must encounter the Fathers. Though well satisfied of the scriptural ground of their system, and therefore made up in their convictions, whatever may turn up in the writings of men, whether for or against it; still, yet such is the unhappy way in which these controversies have been conducted, that they cannot avoid such a discussion as that to which the reader's attention is now briefly solicited.

The early writers of the Christian Church, usually styled the Fathers, however venerable for antiquity and piety, are, for the most part, very unsatisfactory witnesses to any point.

It is but fragments of their writings which have descended to our day, some of them notoriously interpolated and corrupted by later ages; others, detected forgeries. Then the Fathers are by no means clear or discriminating in their views. On the most important doctrines of the Gospel they are not a little vague and confused, and in regard to points of Church government and order their character is the same. They are often self-contradictory and puerile in their interpretations of Scripture. Nay, as is justly remarked by the Rev. Mr. Scott, the well-known commentator on the Bible, they are often mistaken as to undeniable historical facts; for instance, Irenæus contended that Christ was crucified at fifty years of age, and lived to old age, and that this was universal tradition! In short, it seems to have been the intention of the great Head of the Church, that the fragments of their works should be of such a character that no Christian could be in any danger of idolizing or confounding them with the writings of Inspiration; and yet this is the great error into which multitudes have fallen, and continue to fall.

Instead of being *fathers*, in point of clearness, wisdom, and strength, they are truly the *children* of the Christian Church, as Daillie's work on the "Right Use of the Fathers" amply shows. In addition to all this, it is to be borne in mind that there is not a single authentic writing of the first three hundred years which speaks directly and formally to the questions in agitation; any thing which occurs is incidental. What sad disadvantages are these! Who, with any important interest at stake, in daily life, would be willing to rest much upon the testimony of such witnesses, especially when the testimony is given casually and by the way; and when the age in which they lived was one of notorious and growing declension in matters which could not fail to affect their judgment? To render the writings of the Fathers of any use in the circumstances in which they appear, they would have needed to have had every advantage of character and position. Instead of this, they are destitute of all. No wonder, then, that many Presbyterians should decline to descend to the discussion to which they invite, as of very little value. But with all this the reader will greatly mistake if he imagines, as many Prelatical writers would lead him to think, that Presbytery has no countenance from early antiquity, and that its voice is clear and unanimous in favour of Prelacy. The very opposite is the truth. To one who has had any opportunity of examining the subject, nothing can seem more ludicrous than the vauntings of the friends of Prelacy. Such is the force of truth, that throughout all the dimness and imperfection of

the fragmentary writings of the Fathers, the light of Presbytery shines at least with such clearness as to show the utter fallacy of the opposite claims.

With the explanations which have been given as to the character and value of the writings of the Fathers, and their perfect impotence to affect the previous determination produced by the Word of God, let us, more as a matter of curiosity than in a more serious light, contemplate the testimony of the leading Fathers of the first two, the purest centuries —the remainder may be safely left to the learned and the idle. Presbyterians have never shrunk from the argument on this or on any other field. Most of the works which they have published in defence of their views, and which, for talent and learning, throw the Fathers into hopeless shade, deal fully in testimonies from primitive antiquity. By some of them, large volumes have been devoted to the discussion of a particular point in ecclesiastical history; such as Forrester, Rule, and Jameson, on the Bishop of the Cyprianic age. Cyprian was bishop or minister of Carthage, but not appointed to his office till nearly two hundred and fifty years from the birth of Christ; yet these Presbyterian writers canvass and explore his sentiments as if they were very gospel. This shows how thorough and minute have been the ecclesiastical inquiries of Presbyterianism. I aim at the merest outline of the most important and earliest points.

In setting out on this inquiry, there is only one thing additional which it is essential to bear in mind, and that is the precise point which Episcopalians must prove from the Fathers. It is nothing to show that the *names* of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, occur in their writings. No one denies this; it proves nothing. A Presbyterian, holding that bishops and pastors are the same; that Presbytery includes both teaching and ruling elders; and that the deacon has the charge of the Christian poor and ecclesiastical finance as a permanent office in the Church, lays his account with meeting with such *names*, and deems them essential to the full proof of *his* system, so far as Christian antiquity is concerned. The points which Prelatists *must* prove, and without which the whole appeal to antiquity is delusive, are—that the office of bishop is a distinct office, inherently higher than that of presbyter; that presbyters, with a number of congregations, more or less numerous, are subject to the authority of the bishop; that the bishop has the sole power of ordination, and himself receives a new ordination when raised to the bishopric; and that the whole primitive Church regarded this kind of Episcopacy as of divine ordination. In making the following quotations, let

the reader judge whether these points are directly or indirectly made out in behalf of Prelacy.

Clement of Rome, who lived thirty years after the death of Peter and Paul, at the close of the first century, wrote a letter to the Church of Corinth, in order to heal its divisions. Having seen and conversed with the apostles, he is entitled to as much, if not more, weight than most of the early writers. Here are his strongest sentences on Church government :— "The apostles going abroad, preaching through countries and cities, appointed the first-fruits of their ministry to be bishops and deacons." There is nothing in this inconsistent with Presbytery : bishop, presbyter, and teaching elder, in the view of Scripture, according to Presbyterians, mean the same person. But there is a serious defect here, according to the Prelatic theory; for there is no order of presbyters. Again: "It would be no small sin in us should we cast off those from their *episcopate* (or bishopric) who holily and without blame fulfil the duties. Blessed are those *presbyters* who, having finished their course before these times, have obtained a perfect dissolution." "It is a shame," &c., "that the Church of the Corinthians should, by one or two individuals, be led into a sedition against its *presbyters*. Only let the flock of Christ be in peace with the *presbyters* who are set over it," &c. "Submit to your *presbyters*." The Church is represented as being subjected, not to one, a prelate, but to many presbyters; and no distinction is made between the offices of bishop and presbyter. Had there been a single prelate at Corinth, ruling over all, would Clement, writing on such a subject, have completely overlooked him ? Surely not.

Hermas, at the time he wrote, resided at Rome, where the preceding Clement was a minister. He refers particularly to the Church there, and yet this is his language: "But thou shalt read (the books) in this city, with the *elders* who preside over the Church." This is quite Presbyterian language, and the following words are not inconsistent: "The square and white stones which agree exactly in their joints, are the apostles, and bishops, and doctors, and ministers, who, through the mercy of God, have come in and governed," &c. There is no trace of Prelacy here. The Churches are ruled by a plurality of elders, or presbyters, who evidently are of the same rank with bishops. There is nothing about superiority or exclusive ordination. In the second quotation there seems to be an accumulation of names describing the same persons.

Polycarp, bishop or pastor of Smyrna, comes next. Even the word bishop—which, properly understood, is quite harmless—does not occur in his writings. He refers only to

presbyters and deacons, which, however, embrace all that Presbyterians contend for; the first being divisible into the teaching and ruling presbyters. "It behoves you," says he, addressing the Philippians, "to abstain from these things, being subject to presbyters and deacons, as to God and Christ." It is plain that he contemplated no one above the presbyter, as Episcopalians contend; for the Philippians are to be subject to them as to God and Christ, who have none above them. Moreover, Polycarp, as a bishop, is exhorted by a contemporary Father to be formally acquainted with every member of his flock. How? By cultivating acquaintance only with the inferior clergy—the presbyters and the deacons? No; but by acquainting himself with every one by name, down to the servant maid; evidently showing that Polycarp, though a bishop, had no flock but a congregational one.

We now pass to Ignatius. Episcopalian writers found largely upon him. They contend for every word as if it were very gospel; and yet of the fifteen Letters attributed to him, all scholars are now agreed that more than a half are gross forgeries, written several centuries after the death of the honoured martyr. One of the letters is a pretended one from the Virgin Mary to Ignatius; of the remainder, learned men are at a loss to determine how much is genuine, and how much consists of corrupt interpolations—interpolations intended to favour Prelacy. Jameson, through four sections of his "Nazianzeni Querela," &c., discusses the weight due to Ignatius' epistles, which, whether received or rejected, must carry conviction to every candid mind. An Episcopalian writer *(Christian Observer*, vol. ii. p. 710), by no means disposed to underrate the early testimonies in behalf of his own views, confesses that, on the point in dispute, Ignatius is so unlike his brethren, "marshals the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons, with such unreasonable exactness, and repeated and unfortunate anxiety," as to throw the greatest suspicion over his testimony. He is like a witness in a court of law, whose memory, as to remote and minute circumstances, is so uncommonly exact, that the judge and jury at once see that he is detailing a vamped up story of recent invention. I might well dismiss Ignatius as a witness. It would be foolish, at all events, to risk anything of importance upon the testimony of the epistles ascribed to him. But there is more than this; the strongest passages which are quoted, to say the least, have as much of a Presbyterian as a Prelatic air. Thus, to the Church of Magnesia, he says: "Seeing I have been judged worthy to see you, by Damas, your most excellent bishop, and by your worthy presbyters,

Bassus and Appollonius, and by my fellow-servant Sotio, the deacon, I determined to write to you." Here, so far as appears, there is nothing more than the minister, ruling presbyters or elders, and deacon of the Presbyterian Church. The epistle takes for granted that the parties "come together into the same place, have one common prayer, one supplication," which agrees much better with a congregational or parochial minister than a diocesan bishop, who does not worship with all his clergy; the presbyters, too, are always represented as being *present* with their bishop, which accords with Presbytery, but not with Episcopacy.

Again: "He that is within the altar is pure; but he that is without—that is, that does anything without the bishop, and presbyters, and deacons—is not pure in his conscience." There is not one word of bishops being of a distinct and superior pastoral order, and being alone entitled to ordain; and without these what is the *real* worth of Ignatius' testimony to Prelatists? Bishop Stillingfleet well says in his 'Irenicum,'"—Of all the thirty-five testimonies produced out of Ignatius' epistles for Episcopacy, I can meet with but one which is brought to prove the *least semblance* of an institution of Christ for Episcopacy; and, if I be not much deceived, the sense of that place is clearly mistaken." The whole strain of the epistles shows, that the bishop of whom they speak is not the diocesan bishop, but the congregational bishop, or Presbyterian pastor. "If the prayer of one or two have so much efficacy, how much more the prayer of the *bishop* and the whole Church?" Even supposing that there were several distinct congregations at Smyrna, with separate pastors, and that Ignatius is styled the bishop of Smyrna, while the same title is not bestowed upon others, this would by no means prove diocesan Episcopacy to be divine. Ignatius might only be the *moderator* of the presbytery, the presiding head, through whom directions to all the Churches in the bounds would naturally pass. This would explain far stronger language than is to be found in Ignatius, in perfect consistency with Presbyterian principle and usage.

Passing over Papias, who, by the way, styles the apostles presbyters, showing that that term marked no inferiority of office to the bishop, we come to an important witness, Irenæus, who became a martyr about A.D. 202. There are various passages—we select two: "When we challenge them (the heretics) to that *apostolical* tradition which is preserved in the Churches, *through the succession of the presbyters*, they oppose the tradition, pretending that they are wiser, not

only than the presbyters, but than the apostles." Again: "Obey those presbyters in the Church who have the succession, as we have shown, from the apostles, *who, with the succession of the episcopate,* received the gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father." Irenæus not only shows plainly that the bishop and the presbyter are the same, attributing the apostolic succession to both, and of equal value in each, but he expressly says that the presbyters received the succession of the episcopate from the apostles. What more could a candid inquirer wish, to establish the operation of Presbyterian principles in the days of Irenæus?

Justin Martyr, who also lived in the second century, describes the usual service of Christian worship. In this he speaks of the *president* as well as of the deacons. All allow this president was the bishop; and if so, then every congregation had its bishop. In other words, the office was congregational, not diocesan.

Clemens Alexandrinus, who lived at the tlose of the second century, a man of great learning, writes: "Just so in the Church, the presbyters are intrusted with the *dignified* ministry, the deacons with the *subordinate.*" Though but a presbyter, he calls himself one of the "governors," which is inconsistent with diocesan Episcopacy, and compares the grades of Church officers with those of angels. Now there are but two among the heavenly host, angels and archangels; at least we do not read of others.

Were there room and occasion for it, and did we not wish to confine the attention of the reader to the earliest testimonies, we might appeal, in the third and fourth centuries, to Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome, Augustine, Hilary, Chrysostom, and others, as bearing out distinctly the views which have been already adduced from earlier antiquity. Several of these, indeed, are quoted by Prelatic writers in *their* behalf, but, I am satisfied, without reason. The language, taken as a whole, and fairly interpreted, is decidedly Presbyterian. The reader is referred, for farther information, to several works quoted in the Appendix, particularly Rule, Forrester, and Jameson. In the meantime, let me ask, Is there any thing which has been brought forward which lends the slightest countenance to the idea that the bishop is a distinct and superior order to that of presbyter; that he has many congregations under him; that ordination is exclusively vested in his hands; and that these things are so important, that without them there cannot be a Christian Church? Will any allege that such is the testimony of one, and much less of all the Christian Fathers; and yet without them what becomes

of diocesan Episcopacy as at present contended for? It is remarkable that, as there is no one in Scripture bearing the name of bishop who is represented as performing an ordination singly, so there is no one in primitive antiquity who is represented as executing this function, nor is there any instance, in its records, of a presbyter receiving a new or second ordination when he became a bishop; yet, if Prelacy were well founded, this must have been of frequent occurrence. The strong presumption founded on this, taken along with other things, is, that Prelacy was an insidious corruption which grew up in the Church. Were there space, this could be shown in its different steps, as has been often done at great length. I have room only to state a few presumptions, that the bishop of the primitive Church was nothing more than the parochial minister, for the following reasons:—

1. The large number of bishops who are represented as attending early councils—six hundred or seven hundred drawn from a space not much larger than a few of our largest counties combined. It is absurd to imagine, especially with the limited progress of Christianity, that these were all diocesans, when there are only twenty-four persons bearing this designation in Great Britain.

2. The small number of souls committed to the care of each bishop. Often they lived in small villages near each other, and could not possibly have the care of more than a few hundreds. Gregory Thaumaturgus had only seventeen professors of Christianity under his charge, and yet he was a bishop!

3. It was common for the flock to meet together for the election of the bishop, and he was ordained in their presence —a fact utterly inconsistent with diocesan Episcopacy.

4. All the elders connected with a bishop are represented as belonging to the same congregation with him, and sitting with him when the congregation is convened for public worship—another fact equally inconsistent with it.

5. The early writers represent the bishop as living in the same house with his presbyters or elders. Is this consistent with the modern notion of the word Bishop? And,

6, and lastly. The nature of the service which he is represented as performing leads to the same conclusion. He is not, like the modern bishop, only busy about the government of the Church, the examination and ordination of young men for the ministry, &c. On the contrary, he is represented as regularly preaching and dispensing the sacraments, visiting the sick, celebrating marriage; in short, discharging all the usual functions of a parochial minister.

Such are the facts, and can any candid mind doubt what

is the fair inference? It is plain that the primitive bishop was just the pastor of a single congregation; no other supposition will explain the facts. The elevation to which he afterwards attained was, like the rise of Antichrist, by slow and insidious degrees, and was, throughout, marked by *unscriptural usurpation*. (For the above and similar facts, see the admirable Letters of Dr. Miller on the Christian Ministry p. 130–134.)

TESTIMONY OF THE REFORMERS.

It is pleasant to leave the Fathers, and turn to the great Reformers from Popery. One immediately feels that he is in contact with a very different and far superior order of minds. Instead of the puerile interpretations of Scripture which disfigure the pages of Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, and various others—interpretations which place them beneath the humblest commentator of our day—we meet with men whose interpretations, after the lapse of three centuries, commend themselves to the judgment of the most intelligent and able, so that they are glad to adopt them as their own. And instead of discordant opinions—a perfect chaos—even on such a vital doctrine as that of the mode of a sinner's justification before God (witness many of the sentiments to be found in Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Jerome, Cyprian), we find, and that without concert, the most remarkable agreement, down to minute points, among the Reformers, though living at a distance, and exercising the most unfettered freedom of private judgment on the Scriptures. The truth is, there is no comparison between the parties, or rather there is the most striking contrast. Not only were the great body of the Reformers men of gigantic minds, but the Spirit of God seems to have been conferred upon them in an eminent degree, at once to fit for the arduous trials which awaited them, and to guide them in drawing up those articles of faith from the Word of God, and constructing that ecclesiastical platform from the same source, which were destined to endure for many generations, and, it may be, to affect the character of Christendom down to the day of judgment. If ever there was a class of men entitled to the deference, and even submission of posterity, the Reformers were the men; but they would be the first themselves to disclaim it, as unscriptural and dangerous, and to direct all disposed to worship them to the Word of God as the *only* as well as the infallible standard of doctrine and practice.

It is marvellous how many Prelatical writers have deceived

themselves, in regard to the sentiments of the Reformers on Church government. While professedly holding their testimony light, they have been at the same time most anxious to show that it is in favour of Prelacy. According to a recent writer, the whole of Christendom was Prelatic at the era of the Reformation. The Reformers held the same views; reluctantly departed from them, owing to the pressure of circumstances; and to the end entertained the highest veneration for the Church of England. The plain truth of the matter is, that Prelacy was *not* universal at the Reformation, except in the apostate Church of Rome; that the faithful and only Protestants, the Waldenses and Bohemians, were Presbyterians; that the Reformers, from the very first, held clear and decided views on the parity of pastors, and never abandoned them; that any expressions, apparently inconsistent with this doctrine, particularly in Calvin, are incidental, and are very obviously misunderstood—at war with the practice as well as the published sentiments of the Reformers; and that the praise of the Church of England chiefly consists of the recommendation, that the early Puritans should abide in her communion as a *lawful* communion, rather than separate at a season when the Church of England was far nearer the Presbyterian Church than she is now, and when there was the prospect of her becoming still nearer by their remaining within her pale. Even supposing that the Reformers had, in the first instance, been favourably disposed to Prelacy, it would not have been wonderful. It was the form of government to which they had all been accustomed, and their subsequent change might justly have been attributed to deeper Scripture study and more mature views. But the fact is, that the great body of them, making the Word of God their standard, started with Presbyterian sentiments from the very outset. Nor was this owing to the absence of any occasion for accurate study. On the contrary, investigation into such points was forced upon them by the Popish controversy, in which they were all engaged. What was the shortest way to overthrow the proud pretensions of the See of Rome? It was by showing that all ministers were equal; in other words, by establishing Presbyterian parity. There is no question that the creating an inequality of ranks among the pastors of the Church—an inequality against which the cautions of our Lord were doubtless directed—lies at the root of the Papacy Prelacy is as really a corruption as purgatory, or any other invention of the Romish apostasy. Once admit inequality where Christ has made none, and it is a mere accident if, in the course of time, it does not become as extreme as between

the curate and the pope. No wonder, then, that men so capacious in mind, and so well read in the Scriptures and in antiquity as the Reformers, should disown the pretensions of Prelacy. It would have been strange had it been otherwise. But let us shortly turn to their testimony.

First of all, it is plain, from the testimony, not of enemies or apostates, but of their own pastors, that the ancient Waldenses, who rise in point of origin as high as the seventh century, if not earlier, and who, under different names, spread themselves widely over Europe for ages, were Presbyterians. Any bishops which they ever had in name were mere presbyters, and claimed no superiority of order or power. Professor Raignolds, an eminent Episcopalian, in a well-known letter to Sir F. Knolleys, declares that the Waldenses had uniformly taught "that all *pastors*, whether styled bishops or priests, have one and the same authority by the Word of God;" and what is still better authority, the 31st Article of their Confession of Faith bears, "It is necessary for the Church to have pastors sufficiently learned, and exemplary in their conduct, as well to preach God's Word as to administer the sacraments and watch over the flock of Jesus Christ, together with the elders and deacons, according to the rules of good and holy Church discipline, and the practice of the primitive Church." It is the glory of the Waldenses that, as a Church, no human power could ever overcome them. The testimony of living Episcopalians, who have resided among them, could be appealed to in behalf of the Presbyterianism of the modern witnesses of Piedmont. Not only their principles, but their very forms, are almost identical with those of the Church of Scotland. The increasing research of modern times is bringing out their ancient Calvinism, and Presbyterianism, and observance of infant baptism, in fresh lustre. (See *Blair's History*, Appendix.) No assertion, then, can be more ignorant, than that Presbytery originated with Calvin. The Waldenses had an organized and powerful Church many centuries before he was born.

The next witness, in point of time, is JOHN WICKLIFFE, "the Morning Star of the Reformation." He flourished about 1350. No one can doubt his testimony, and his widespread followers doubtless imbibed his sentiments. "One thing," says he, "I boldly assert, that in the primitive Church, or in the time of the Apostle Paul, two orders of clergy were thought sufficient, viz., priest and deacon; and I do also say, that in the time of Paul *a priest and a bishop were one and the same.*" His followers could easily have had Prelatical ordination, but they preferred Presbyterian.

Huss and Jerome of Prague come next. They were as remarkable for their learning as scholars, as their devotedness as martyrs. They held the same views as Wickliffe, and particularly on Presbyterian parity. One of the solemn charges brought against them by a Popish adversary, afterwards Pius II., "as a pestiferous sect," was their holding "no difference of order among those who bear the priestly office."

The Bohemian Brethren or Church, who were the followers of the martyrs, maintained the same views. They drew their ministry from the Presbyterian Waldenses—had the office of ruling elder in active operation among them—contended that there is but *one order* of ministers by divine right—that any grades in the ministry is mere matter of human arrangement. Heylin, the chaplain of Laud, and the bitterest of the opponents of Presbytery, admits (in his History, p. 409) that the Bohemian Church was Episcopal neither in principle nor practice.

Luther, the most illustrious of all the Reformers, did not differ from the faithful men who had preceded him. He and his associates, it appears, from certain expressions, were so anxious for the peaceful propagation of the Gospel, that they would have borne with the Prelatic government which prevailed, not as a thing of divine origin, but mere political expediency; and these expressions have been perverted by some writers into a proof that the Reformer and his friends were favourable to Episcopacy, as a divine institution. But nothing can be wider of the truth. It is plain, from the writings of Luther, his comments on texts of Scripture which involve Church government, and an entire book which was written against the bishops, that he held there was but *one* order of teachers by divine right, and that every pastor of a congregation is a bishop, and that Scripture recognises no other. Commenting on the 20th of the Acts, he says: "You see plainly that the apostle Paul calls those alone bishops who preach the gospel to the people, and administer the sacraments, as in our times parish ministers and preachers are wont to do. These, therefore, though they preach the gospel in small villages and hamlets, yet, as faithful ministers of the Word, *I believe, beyond all doubt*, possess of right the title and the name of bishop." And the Reformer's *practice* corresponded with his sentiments. He was himself ordained a presbyter at twenty-four years of age, and for thirty years ordained many—yea, within a few days of his death, in the full prospect of eternity (to use the language of biographers and associates), "ordained two ministers of the Word of God after the apostles'

manner." Of course, this would have been presumptuous sin, according to the notions of Prelacy, which restrict ordination to the diocesan bishop. It is true that Luther had, and his followers, down to the present day, have had, no objections to superintendents in the Church, or rather they prefer them; but this is not on the ground of Scripture or antiquity, but solely of human expediency. It is to be remembered, too, that these superintendents are mere presbyters, can confer only Presbyterian ordination, are responsible to their brethren, and do not always enjoy the office for life.

On one occasion, 1542, Luther, himself a simple presbyter, at the request of the Elector of Saxony, consecrated Amsdorff bishop of a diocese! What inconsistency and folly, had he believed in the bishop or prelate as a divine order, who alone could ordain. (*Vide Mosheim*, vol. iv., p. 287.) In harmony with these views, we find that Melancthon and other associates entertained and acted on the same sentiments. From the Augustan Confession—the Defence of that document by Melancthon—the Articles of Smalcald in 1537, &c.; in short, the standards of the Lutheran Church, extracts are quoted by Dr. Miller in his Letters (pp. 372, 373), all clearly and triumphantly bearing out the conclusions which have been stated.

Were it necessary, it would be easy to refer to a multitude of distinguished Lutheran divines and writers, some contemporaneous with the Reformer, others subsequent to his day, who held and proclaimed the same sentiments. Some were professors of divinity—others, themselves superintendents in the Lutheran Church, such as Ursinus, Musculus, Balduin, Deiterich, Hulseman, Gehard, Budus, &c.; but their testimony is harmonious. These authorities are collected by Dr. Miller in his sixth and eighth Letters; they need not here be quoted.

Turning from the Lutheran Churches to those which more expressly bear the name of Reformed, the testimony to Presbytery becomes, if possible, more decided. Indeed, no one who has carefully read the Confessions of Faith of the Saxon, Bohemian, Swiss, Belgic, Dutch, French, and Scotch Churches, can question their Presbyterian character. Accordingly, there is no controversy upon these points. Were there room, many striking passages might be quoted, but I forbear. Let me only assure the reader, that among the fathers and founders of these Churches, he will find men as pre-eminent, if not more pre-eminent, for talent, learning, the study of the Word of God, submission to its authority, integrity, and public usefulness, as in any Churches of Christendom in any period

of history, ancient or modern. I single out one name—that of Calvin, not so much for its acknowledged superiority and influence, as to correct a misapprehension. The friends of Episcopacy, anxious for the benefit of his name, have often alleged that he was favourable to their views, and have quoted one or two detached sentences from his voluminous works in proof of their assertion; but these can be easily explained from circumstances which have been already noticed. The strongest of them all, as Dr. M'Crie well shows, not only does not, but cannot, apply to the Church of England.* The sentiments of Calvin are to be learned from his "Institutes," his earliest work, published at twenty-seven years of age, where he fully discusses the subject, and his Commentaries on the Scriptures, down to the day of his death—from his own practice—from the advice which he gave to the Churches of Scotland and France, an advice which they acted upon, believing it to be accordant with Scripture—from his very will and testament—all mark the enlightened and resolute Presbyterian. I subjoin a single sentence from a comment on the 20th of Acts, written very shortly before his death. "Concerning the word bishop," he says, "it is observable that Paul gives this title to all the presbyters of Ephesus; from which we may infer, that, *according to Scripture*, presbyters differed in no respect from bishops, but that it arose from corruption and a departure from primitive purity, that those who held the first seats in particular cities began to be called bishops. I say that it arose from corruption—not that it is an evil for some one in each college of pastors to be distinguished above the rest, but because it is *intolerable presumption that men, in perverting the titles of Scripture to their own humour, do not hesitate to alter the meaning of the Holy Spirit.*"†

It would be endless to quote the distinguished Continental writers who held and maintained the sentiments of Calvin. Suffice it to mention the names of a few. The Presbyterian, the only Protestant Church of France, was remarkable for the ability and learning of her sons, and for the contributions which they made to the literature of the Church. It is no dishonour to the learned men of modern times to say, that it would not be easy from their ranks to draw such men as Sadeel, Chamier, Danau, Le Blanc, De Moulin, Bochart, Blondel, Daille, and Claude, and many others; and yet their Presbyterianism is indubitable. Turning to Holland, similar names appear, such as Junius in early days, who preached

* Miscel. Writings, p. 176.

† For a notice of Calvin in this connection, *vide* p. 158 of "Eldership of the Church of Scotland."

at Antwerp with no other light than that supplied by blazing martyrs. The divines of the Synod of Dort—the most pious and learned of their profession, of whose assembly Bishop Hall said, "there was no place upon earth so like heaven as the Synod of Dort, or where he should be more willing to dwell"—they came under the solemn sanction of an oath to the resolution: "We believe that the true Church must be governed by that spiritual policy which our Lord hath taught us in his Word, viz., that there must be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God, and to administer the sacraments; also elders and deacons, who, together with the pastors, form the council of the Church. As for the ministers of God's Word, they have *equally* the same power and authority wheresoever they are; as they are all ministers of Christ, the only universal Bishop and the only Head of the Church." I quote these words the more, because some, from the circumstance that a few English bishops, at the request of James VI., were present, and acted as members of Synod, have drawn the inference that the assembly was favourably inclined to Prelacy. A more natural inference would have been, that the good English bishops of those days were strangers to the notion of Episcopacy by *divine right*, and recognised the Presbyterian ordination of the Dutch Church, and acknowledged her as a sister. If farther proof of the decided Presbyterianism of the Synod of Dort were desired, it may be found in the published works of Gomarus, Polyander, Thysius, and Walæus, all members of Synod, and professors of divinity in the Dutch universities; in the writings also of the celebrated Salmasius. The same point might be established from the constitution of the Synod: out of the ninety members, twenty were ruling elders.

The only remaining point in connection with the testimony of the Reformers which demands notice, is the opinion of the early English Reformers and Divines. Though their testimony had been clear and unanimous *against* Presbytery, it would not have been wonderful, nor would it have affected the weight of the other authorities which have been quoted. But it is an interesting and remarkable fact, that the great men of the Church of England, in her early, and perhaps some would say, her best days, did not differ from their brother Reformers of the Continent; but either held, with them, that there should be no diversity of rank among the ministers of the gospel, or contended for it as a mere matter of expediency, to be retained till the days of a more extensive and favourable reformation. It is certain that the opinion of Episcopacy, as founded on divine right, is comparatively a recent idea,

that its origin can be pointed out, and that its prevalence can be identified with the ascendency of the Arminian Archbishop Laud, towards the middle of the seventeenth century. The reader is referred to the Appendix of Ayton's work for "A Short Account of the Rise of the *Jure Divino* Prelatists," where a full answer to each of their arguments is "drawn forth from the writings of many learned Episcopal divines and members of their own Church." This *jure divino* doctrine is the doctrine which is so prevalent in the Church of England at the present day, through the labours of her new Tractarian school. I have space to advert only to a few testimonies on the other side; but they are indisputable.

It appears, then, that the earliest of the English martyrs, distinguished for learning as well as high principle, one of them the first translator of the Word of God into English, Tyndal and Lambert, with many of their brethren, maintained the identity of the bishop and the presbyter, and the perfect *equality* of the ministers of the Gospel. In Archbishop Cranmer's "Institution of a Christian Man," printed in 1537, subscribed and recommended by two archbishops, nineteen bishops, and the whole Lower House of Convocation, it is expressly declared, "That in the New Testament there is no mention made of any other degree and distinction in orders, but only of deacons or ministers, and of presbyters or bishops." Thus, it is obvious that the founders of the Church of England were essentially Presbyterian; and doubtless, had it not been for the influence of the scarcely half-reformed civil government, which clung to the old Popish government of prelates, their principles would have been carried into effect. Passing from additional evidence of the same nature, which might be appealed to, the reader may be reminded that in the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, the one (Twenty-third) which bears upon the office of the ministry does not contain one word about diocesan bishops, or the necessity of Episcopal ordination; on the contrary, it uses such language, apparently on purpose, as shall comprehend other Reformed Churches, and recognise the validity of their ordinances. "Those," says the Article, "we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard." Is this like the language of men who hold diocesan bishops to be essential to the being of a Christian Church? If they held the sentiment, would they not, on such an occasion as the drawing up articles involving the constitution of the Church, have expressed it? But this is not all.

The founders of the English Church invited the aid of leading men in other Churches, such as Bucer and Peter Martyr, and recognised their ordination, though it was only Presbyterian. Archbishop Grindal in this way received John Morison, a minister of the Church of Scotland, to labour in the diocese of Canterbury in 1582. Indeed, as is stated by Bishop Burnet for a long time after the beginning of the Reformation in Great Britain, the validity of Presbyterian ordination was clearly and uniformly acknowledged. The first intimation of an opposite notion did not appear till 1588. The person who first gave utterance to the sentiment in the Protestant Church, that bishops, *by divine right*, have a superiority to presbyters, was Doctor (afterwards Bishop) Bancroft, at that time chaplain to Archbishop Whitgift, who, as his writings testify, disclaimed all such views. Bancroft's sermon, as might have been anticipated in the circumstances, gave great offence, and drew forth a letter from Dr. J. Raignolds, professor of divinity in the university of Oxford—accounted a prodigy of learning as well as humility by his contemporaries. The letter was in reply to one from Sir F. Knolleys. The following are one or two sentences:—"All that have laboured in reforming the Church, for five hundred years, have taught that all pastors, be they entitled bishops or priests, *have equal authority and power by God's Word*—as, first, the Waldenses; next, Marsilius Petavinus; then Wickliffe and his disciples; afterwards Huss and the Hussites; and last of all, Luther, Calvin, Brentius, Bullinger, and Musculus. Among ourselves we have bishops; the Queen's professors of divinity, in our universities, and other learned men, as Bradford, Lambert, Jewel, Pilkington, Humfreys, Fulke, who all agree in this matter; and so do all divines beyond sea that I ever read, and doubtless many more whom I never read. But why do I speak of particular persons? It is the common judgment of the Reformed Churches of Helvetia (Switzerland), Savoy, France, Scotland, Germany, Hungary, Poland, the Low Countries (Holland), and *our own* (the Church of England). Wherefore, since Dr. Bancroft will certainly never pretend that an *heresy* condemned by the consent of the whole Church, in its most flourishing times, was yet accounted a sound and Christian doctrine by all these I have mentioned, I hope he will acknowledge that he was mistaken, when he asserted the superiority which bishops have among us over the clergy to be God's own ordinance." (*Boyse on Episcopacy*, pp. 13–19.)

It is unnecessary to add any thing to the statements of this admirable document, which must be held by all candid

men as settling the question of the sentiments of the early Church of England on the claims of Prelacy to a divine origin. The reader who wishes farther to investigate the views of the English Reformers on the government and worship of the Church, and to see their harmony with those of the other Reformed Churches, in short, their substantial Presbyterianism and Puritanism, may consult "M'Crie's Life of Knox," App., vol. i., pp. 385–390.

Satisfied of the unquestionable accuracy of the views which have been presented, we forbear from making any quotations from the writings of leading divines of the Church of England, *subsequent* to the Reformation, down to the Revolution, and even to the present day. To such passages it would have been easy to refer. In addition to the names of the Reformers which have been given, those of Jewel, Willet, Bilson, Holland, Whitaker, Hall, Davenant, Usher, Hooker, might have been subjoined; and later still, those of Stillingfleet, Tillotson, Wake, Bingham, Edwards, Haweis, Gisborne, Tomline, Noel; who all, with greater or less distinctness, disclaim the views of the higher Prelatists—but this is unnecessary. The truth is, that almost all sound writers against the Papacy, if consistent, must entertain Presbyterian views of the pastoral office. If parity be once allowed in the ministry, and different ranks suited to different ranks in society, it will be difficult to show that there should not be a pope above all. The true way to cut up his pretensions by the root, is to establish ministerial parity.

Reviewing the whole, it appears that the Reformers from Popery, large in point of numbers, widely dispersed in point of situation, men of powerful minds, eminent learning, ardent students of the Scriptures and of antiquity, distinguished also for their spirit of prayer, though exposed to opposite temptations, came to clear, decided, unanimous views on the parity of pastors as a scriptural principle, and acted upon it wherever they had the opportunity; in the few cases where they did depart from it, avowedly doing so on the score of human expediency. Such are the facts of the case, and do they not speak powerfully in behalf of Presbytery? Is not England standing *alone* in Protestant Christendom for the divine right of Prelacy, and even she not maintaining this position in her best days, one of the most impressive testimonies which can be conceived in favour of the principles of the Church of Scotland? If ever human authority should weigh with them, this should be the occasion. But we again remind the reader, that it is neither the Fathers nor the Reformers on whom we rely; we appeal to the authority of God speaking in the Scrip-

tures as supreme. This is the exclusive as it is the perfect standard of faith and practice.

I cannot more appropriately conclude the testimony of the Reformers than in the words of the great Alexander Henderson, one of the most distinguished ministers of the Church of Scotland, in one of the most eventful periods of her history. The passage, while it bears testimony to Presbytery in general, has a special reference to the Church of Scotland, as a Presbyterian Church. The admirable little work from which it is taken is very scarce, and almost unknown. It is entitled, "The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland—1641." Though anonymous, Baillie, and the Reviewer of "Protesters not Subverters," unhesitatingly ascribe it to Henderson. It is worthy of the celebrated Moderator of the General Assembly of 1638.

Speaking of the Church courts, he says: "In the authority of these assemblies, parochial, presbyterial, provincial, and national, and in the subordination of the lesser unto the greater, or of more particular elderships to the larger and general eldership, doth consist the external order, strength, and stedfastness of the Church of Scotland, which is lovely and comfortable to all fearing God, whether pastors or professors, and hath been very awful and terrible as an army with banners to all Papists, to all heretics, schismatics, hirelings, and all ungodly persons. As, upon the one part, they break not the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, but do cherish and labour to bring to ripeness and use the grain of mustard-seed in sincere beginners, and the smallest talent in preachers having the zeal of God; so, upon the other part, no scandal of proud sinners escapeth censure, no heresy or error is sooner hatched, but is either presently spied out and crushed by some of the inferior assemblies, or, if it be kept on foot and gather strength, it is quite suppressed and extinguished in the General Assembly, which meeteth once in the year, and never suffereth such bastard births to grow to be one year old; which is a true and main cause why no sects nor errors have appeared in the Reformed Church of France; and in the Churches of Scotland and of the Low Countries, so long as they enjoyed the liberty and happiness of assemblies—which they did no sooner by the mercy of God recover but immediately, at their brightness, the mists and mildews, gathered before, were scattered and vanished.

"2*d*, And as, by the order and power of these assemblies, foxes are taken that they spoil not the vines, and gangrenes are prevented that they spread not against truth and unity, all sorts of lewd and wicked men are discouraged and put

to shame; so is there excited among the godly ministers an holy emulation, by acquaintance, conference, and by perceiving the gifts one of another, which maketh them return from the assemblies with a mean and humble conceit of themselves, and with new and strong resolutions for greater diligence in their studies, and faithfulness in every pastoral duty, to the common benefit and edification of all the Churches; all the ministers are made more wise in the matters of government; and all the congregations are affected with reverence to what is required of them by their particular elderships, as having the consent and approbation of the whole Church. Many such fruits are reaped of these assemblies, which, without them, no particular person or congregation can have any ground to hope for or expect.

"*3d*, They have no archbishops, diocesan bishops, suffragans, no chapters, no curates, dumb nor idle ministers; no hirelings, non-residents, nor pluralists; no deans, nor archdeacons; no chanters, sub-chanters, nor treasurers; no chancellors, officials, nor apparitors; no canons, petit-canons, prebends, singing men nor boys; and yet, without these and the like, they have practice and use of all the ordinances of Christ; all matters ecclesiastical determined; remitting questions of tithes, marriages, divorcements, &c., to the civil judge, to whom they properly do belong; and all petitions, complaints, and Church grievances heard and redressed, which they esteem as the sweet yoke of Christ, and think it a great ease, both to their consciences and estates, to be free of such bundles and burdens of trash and superfluities. They conceive that to erect presbyteries, synods, and National Assemblies, and still to keep prelates and the members of that hierarchy, is, in the matter of Church government, not unlike the Popish adding of traditions to Scripture in the rule of faith, or works unto faith in the point of justification, &c.; additions to Christ's institution being not only, in respect to their author, human inventions, and for any use they can have, idlements, vanities, and follies; but that they do also corrupt the purity, and eat out the life of the ordinances of Christ.

"*4th*, Here there is a superiority without tyranny, for no minister hath a papal or monarchical jurisdiction over his own flock, far less over other pastors, and over all the congregations of a large diocese. Here, then, is parity without confusion and disorder, for the pastors are in order before the elders, and the elders before the deacons; every particular Church is subordinate to the presbytery, the presbytery to the synod, and the synod to the National Assembly. One pastor, also, hath priority of esteem before another for age,

for zeal, for gifts, for his good deservings of the Church, each one honouring him whom God hath honoured, and as he beareth the image of God; which was to be seen amongst the apostles themselves. But none hath pre-eminence of title, or power, or jurisdiction above others; even as in nature, one eye hath not power over another, only the head hath power over all, even as Christ over his Church. The same may be seen in the Commonwealth, and in some of the offices of the Roman Church itself. And, lastly, here there is a subjection without slavery; for the people are subject to the pastors and assemblies, yet there is no assembly wherein every particular Church hath not interest and power, nor is there anything done but they are, if not actually yet virtually, called to consent unto it.

"*5th*, As they have done and suffered much for vindicating and maintaining the liberty of their religion, that what belongeth unto God may be rendered unto God; so do they desire that, according to the rule of righteousness, each man have his own, and above all men; that the things which are Cæsar's be rendered unto him, and to give him that which is God's, were a wronging both of God and Cæsar. They have ever been willing to taxes, and to pay subsidies above that which they were able. They join with the inward reverence of their hearts external honour and obedience in all things lawful. They pour forth their prayers to God in private and public, for all blessings, spiritual and temporal, upon the king's royal person and government, and upon his progeny; and for the same blessings upon the queen's majesty, especially that God by his Spirit would give unto her the knowledge and love of the truth. They long for her conversion, as happiness to herself,* and a mean of great happiness to the king, to their children, and to all their subjects; and that the Lord may answer their prayers, they think it incumbent to the Church of England, nor can any bond whatsoever oblige them to the contrary, to use the best and most powerful means, and would most willingly, in all humility, love, and respect, join their endeavours for that blessed end. And as they thus present their best desires and prayers, so are they ready to sacrifice their lives to God for his majesty's good, and in their hearts are grieved that their loyalty, which they account their no small glory, should have been called in question.

"*6th*, Neither is this all. But, moreover, they do acknowledge that his majesty, as supreme magistrate, hath not only charge over the Commonwealth, but doth watch, and hath

* The Queen was then, in the year 1641, a Papist.

inspection over the Church and Church matters, but in a civil way—"*Vos Episcopi in Ecclesia* (saith Constantine), *ego extra Ecclesiam Episcopus á Deo constitutus sum;*" and therefore, that he is by his high calling and place, *Custos utriusque tabulæ*, to command the precepts of the first table as well as of the second table to be obeyed; that he is *Vindex religionis* by his sword, as the Spirit of God in Scripture is *Judex*, and the Church is *Index;* that he hath power to turn the constitutions of the Church into laws, and to confirm them by the civil sanction in Parliament, that he may constrain all his subjects to do duty in matters of religion,* and may punish the transgressors; that when debates arise about religion, he hath power to call assemblies of the Church, to be present, and civilly preside in them, and to examine their constitutions, that he may discern of them both as a Christian caring for his own soul, and as a supreme magistrate watching over his people; and that he may do all things which can prove him to be a kind and careful nursing father. They account all that is vomited out to the contrary (as that they liked anarchy better than monarchy, and that they would turn a kingdom into a democracy) to be but the fictions and calumnies of the malicious enemies of God and his truth; not unlike the lies which were devised against the Christians of old; their consciences, their words, writings, and actions, even then when the world did put the worst constructions upon them, were witnesses of the integrity of their heart.

"7*th*, They do still hold there can be no antipathy betwixt one ordinance of God and another. By him princes do reign, and he hath also appointed the officers and government of his own house. They do desire nothing more than that the Son of God may reign, and that with and under the Son of God, the king may command, and they, as good subjects to Christ and the king, may obey." (P. 57.)

This is an ancient, but correct and beautiful testimony. Perhaps the reader will not regret to be reminded of a briefer and more modern. The Parliamentary Committee on Church Patronage in 1834, on reporting the result of their labours to the Legislature, remark: "No sentiment has been so deeply impressed on the mind of your Committee, in the course of their long and laborious investigation, as that of veneration and respect for the Established Church of Scotland. They believe that no institution has ever existed, which, at so little cost, has accomplished so much good. The eminent place which Scotland holds in the scale of nations is mainly owing to the purity of the standards, and the zeal of the ministers

* The just freedom, nevertheless, of conscience still excepted.

of its Church, as well as the wisdom with which its internal institutions have been adapted to the habits and interests of the people." (*Report on Patronage.*)

The eldership of the Presbyterian Church, too, has been successfully vindicated by Dr. King of Glasgow, and Dr. M'Kerrow of the United Presbyterian Church.

ADDITIONAL FACTS ON THE MORAL TENDENCY OF CALVINISM.

(Referred to at page 65.)

MANY additional facts to those given in the text might be stated; let a few suffice. Fuller, in his triumphant little work, "The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems Compared in their Moral Tendency," has beautifully made out that Calvinism has a very high moral influence as compared with Socinianism; and it cannot be doubted, that on many of the grounds stated, it would be found greatly superior to Arminianism. It could be shown that Calvinism supplies the best answer to the objections against the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel—doctrines which both parties admit to be the grand sources of all truly moral influence; and that, its theory of Scripture interpretation is much more simple, and sublime, and glorifying to the character of God than any other. These things must be favourable to high moral and religious principle and conduct.

With regard more particularly to facts, all will admit that true Calvinists are, in point of character, at least as good as the professors of Arminianism—as zealous for God—as ready to make sacrifices—as benevolent to their fellow-men. This, at least, shows that Calvinism cannot be *very* injurious; and yet, if one were to believe in the representations which too many give of it, he could expect nothing but the most loose and abandoned life as its fruit.

Toplady testifies to the superior power of his preaching in *converting souls*, when he preached the Calvinistic system, than before; and if conversion to God be the first and best security for individual holiness, and, through it, national morality, it is plain that Calvinism must be considered the friend of both. He says, in 1774: "As to the doctrines of special and discriminating grace, I have this much to observe, that for the first four years after I was in orders, I dwelt chiefly on the general outline of the Gospel. I preached little else but of justification by faith only in the righteousness and atonement of Christ, and of that personal holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. My reasons for thus narrowing the truths of God were (with humiliation and repentance I desire

to speak it) these two:—1*st*, I thought these points were sufficient to convey as clear an idea as was absolutely necessary of salvation; and, 2*d*, I was partly afraid to go any farther. God himself (for none but he could do it) gradually freed me from that fear. And as he never at any time permitted me to deliver, or even insinuate, anything contradictory to his truths, so has he been graciously pleased, for between seven and eight years past, to open my mouth to make known the entire mystery of his Gospel, as far as his Spirit has enlightened me in it. The consequence of my first plan of operations was, that the generality of my hearers were pleased, *but very few were converted.* The result of my latter deliverance from worldly wisdom and worldly fear, is, that multitudes have been very angry. But the conversions which God has given me reason to hope he has wrought, *have been at least three for one before.* Thus I can testify, so far as I have been concerned, the usefulness of preaching predestination, or, in other words, of tracing salvation and redemption to their first source."

Abraham Booth, a popular and useful evangelical writer, thus describes his own change of mind in becoming a Calvinist. After speaking of persons who, though their own *experience* may plead for Calvinism, and though their other avowed sentiments involve it, yet dispute against it as commonly and justly stated, and endeavour to load it with horrid consequences, he goes on to say of himself: "This the writer of these pages knows by experience, to his grief and shame. Through the ignorance of his mind, the pride of his heart, and the prejudices of his education, he, in his younger years, often opposed it with much warmth, though with no small degree of weakness; but after an impartial inquiry and many prayers, he found reason to alter his judgment. He found it to be *the doctrine of the Bible, and a dictate of the unerring Spirit.* Being thus patronized, he received the once obnoxious sentiment under the full conviction of its being a divine truth. Now he considers the eternal discriminating love of God, in the choice of his people, as the original source of all those spiritual blessings they here enjoy, and of all that glory they hereafter expect. To the distinguishing love of the Father, to the redeeming blood of the Son, to the almighty agency and sanctifying operation of the Divine Spirit, he now desires to ascribes the whole unrivalled honour of a complete eternal salvation. In the firm belief of those glorious comprehensive truths he desires to live—enjoying the sweet consolations arising from it, he desires to die; and if the Lord thus favour him, he does not fear but *his life will be useful* in some degree,

his death peaceful, and his end salvation." (*Death of Legal Hope*, p. 46.)

Can any one read such a statement of feeling and hope as this, and imagine that Calvinism makes a man careless in his religion and relaxed in his morals? Is not its tone rather spiritual and sanctifying, plainly conducting to much happiness, and so to active usefulness?

Passing from *individual* testimonies and experience, how striking is the following picture of the moral influence of Puritanism, which was Calvinistic in doctrine and Presbyterian in form. The most zealous advocates of Arminianism were to be found among the High Church party of Archbishop Laud, not at that time numerous, and the wilder Sectaries? The writer is the Rev. J. Jones, the biographer of Bishop Hall, "Life and Times," 1826. He is a minister of the Church of England, and though better than many Episcopalians when writing of such times, is by no means particularly favourable to the Puritans; yet the following is his sketch of the moral operation of their system, which was one of unbroken Calvinism:—"During the troubles of the times, on account of the differences between Charles I. and the Parliament, Puritanism was in one sense productive of much good. *The reformation of manners was then very remarkable.* The laws against vice and profaneness were so strict and so vigorously put in execution, that vice was forced to hide itself in corners. The magistrates did their duty in suppressing all kinds of games, stage-plays, and abuses in public-houses. *There was not a play acted on any theatre in England for almost twenty years.* Profane swearing, drunkenness, or any kind of debauchery, were not to be heard or seen on the streets. The Lord's-day was observed with unusual reverence. The churches were crowded with numerous and attentive worshippers, three or four times in the day. The peace-officers patrolled the streets of London, and all the public-houses were shut up. There was no travelling on the road or walking in the fields, except in cases of absolute necessity. Religious *exercises* were set up in private families—as reading the Scriptures, family prayer, repeating sermons, and singing of psalms. This was so general a custom, that we are told a person might walk through the city of London, on the evening of the Lord's-day, without seeing an idle person, or hearing any thing but the voice of prayer or praise from churches or private houses. *It is also said that there was hardly a single bankruptcy to be heard of in a year*, and that even in such a case the bankrupt had a mark of infamy set upon him, that he could never wipe off." (Pp. 455, 456.)

While the morality of the Calvinistic period of the seventeenth century was so pure and stern in England, what was the character of the Arminian period which succeeded? It was dissolute to a proverb. We do not charge the Arminian doctrine with being the cause of all the mischief—there were other adverse influences at work; but that it produced much evil is certain; and it is not less clear that it was too weak to prevent what it did not directly produce. Toplady, addressing the bench of bishops, and therefore, it may be believed, writing with all due caution, says: "With that prince (Charles II.) Arminianism returned as a flood, and licentiousness of manners was co-extensive with it. We have had since that period more than one hundred years' experience of the unsanctified effects which naturally result from the ideal system of free-will and universal redemption. What has that system done for us? It has unbraced every nerve of virtue, and relaxed every rein of religious and social duty. In proportion to the operation of its influence, it has gone far toward subverting all moral obedience, and seems to endanger the entire series even of political and ecclesiastical subordination, &c. Look round the land, and your Lordships cannot fail of perceiving that our fiercest free-willers are for the most part the freest livers, and that the belief of universal grace is in too many instances the turnpike road to universal sin." (P. 278.) In accordance with these views, Toplady, at a later, day, quoted, as an illustration of the demoralizing influence of Arminianism fairly carried out, the case of a zealous advocate of the system, who, "when he was in a fit of intemperance, if any one reminded him of the wrath of God threatened against such courses, he would answer, I am a child of the devil to-day, *but I have free will, and to-morrow I will make myself a child of God.*" (Works, p. 759.)

A recent number of the "Edinburgh Review," January, 1841, without connecting the immoral results of the period of the Restoration with the state of religious sentiment, bears a striking testimony to the extent and fearfulness of the moral relaxation. This literary journal, not, of course, on religious grounds, but as a matter of historical fact, contended many years ago for the moralizing influence of Calvinism on society. The following sentences describe the state of England when Arminianism was everywhere encouraged and all-powerful. Surely there can be nothing in its influence very favourable to strict morals, otherwise we should not have such results as these. Writing of the dramatists, the reviewer says: "We can at present hardly call to mind a single English play written before the civil

war" (a generally Calvinistic period) "in which the character of a seducer of married women is represented in a favourable light. We remember many plays in which such persons are baffled and exposed, covered with derision, and insulted by triumphant husbands." Proofs are given. He then adds: "In general we will venture to say, that the dramatists of the age of Elizabeth and James I." (a still more Calvinistic period) "either treat the breach of the married vow as a serious crime, or, if they treat it as a matter of laughter, turn the laugh against the gallant. On the contrary, during the forty years which followed the Restoration" (a strongly Arminian period), "the whole body of the dramatists invariably represented adultery, not as a peccadillo or error of the passions, but as the calling of a fine gentleman—as a grace, without which his character would be imperfect. It is represented as essential as that he should know French or wear a wig. There is no passion in it."

Now contemplate the moral result on society. "A period of wild and desperate dissoluteness followed. Even in remote manor-houses and hamlets, the change" (from the strictness of the Commonwealth—in other words, from Calvinism to Arminianism) "was felt. But in London the outbreak of debauchery was appalling; and in London the places most deeply affected were, the palace, the quarters inhabited by the aristocracy, and the inns of court. It was on the support of these parts of the town that the play-houses depended. The character of the drama became conformed to the character of its patrons. The comic poet was the mouth-piece of the most deeply corrupted part of a corrupted society, and in the plays before us (Wycherley and Congreve), we find distilled and condensed the essential spirit of the fashionable world during the anti-Puritan reaction."

Dr. Owen, who lived in both periods—the Commonwealth and the age of Charles II.—gives a fearful and detailed picture of the irreligion and profanity of the latter. (*Inquiry*, &c., pp. 206, 207, 331.) To prevent misapprehension, I beg leave to state, that while fully convinced that Arminianism, carried out to its logical consequences, lowers both the law and the gospel, and so relaxes morality, I am equally convinced that there are multitudes who popularly pass under the name of Arminian, such as many of the present Evangelical party in the Church of England, and of the modern Wesleyan Methodists, who are much better than their professed name, who hold the doctrine of justification by free grace through faith alone, and only differ from Calvinists in tracing up grace to its source. Such persons are Anti-pre-

destinarian, but should not be confounded or classed with Arminians, properly so called—the men who make a man's good works the ground of his acceptance with God.

WORKS ON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

Among the leading British works in defence of the Presbyterian Church, some more extensive in their scope than others, but all indicating a talent and learning which rebuke the allegation that the ministers of the Presbyterian Church are weak or ignorant men, may be enumerated the following :*—

"Altare Damascenum seu Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Politia," 1623. This is a thick quarto in Latin, by David Calderwood, the historian. It has frequently been republished on the Continent, where it bears, and justly, a high reputation.

"A Dispute against the English-Popish Ceremonies obtruded upon the Church of Scotland, wherein not only our own arguments against the same are strongly confirmed, but likewise the answers and defences of our opposites, &c., particularly confuted," 1637. A small quarto in English, most masterly in its character, by George Gillespie, one of the ministers of Edinburgh.

"Aaron's Rod Blossoming; or, the Divine Ordinance of Church Government Vindicated," &c., 1646. It is by the same author, and is dedicated to the divines of the Westminster Assembly, of which he was a member as a commissioner from Scotland. Many other publications, bearing more or less on Presbyterian Church government, proceeded from his pen; among others, "An Assertion of the Discipline and Government of the Church of Scotland," 1641, in small quarto. Gillespie was a first-rate scholar for his years—learned in the original languages of the Scriptures and antiquity, and highly esteemed by his contemporaries. In debate he was eminent.

* It is not necessary to refer to foreign writers; otherwise, in addition to those named in the preface, many might be adduced, such as F. Turretine, "De Distinctione Episcopi et Presbyteri," in his "Institutio Theologiæ," tom. 3.

Vitringa, a professor of theology and Church history at Franeker, in North Holland, "De Synagoga Vetere," showing that the government and ministry of the Ancient were transferred to the Christian Church. (P. 846.)

H. Witsius, "De Vita Timothei." (P. 318.) "Exercitationes Deylingii Observationes Miscellaneæ." (P. 429.)

"Ursinus Corpus Doctrinæ Christianæ." (P.582.) And the usual text-books used in the Continental Divinity Halls.

Among modern works, "Neander's Church History," and also "Planting of the Christian Church," might be appealed to. He contends for the primitive identity of the bishop and presbyter.

The works of the antagonist of Selden and Lightfoot in the Westminster Assembly are well worthy the attention of intelligent Presbyterians.

"Due Right of Presbytery," by Samuel Rutherford, author of the celebrated "Letters" which bear his name—a man of eminent scholarship and acuteness, as his attainments in Rabbinical learning, appearances in the Westminster Assembly, his works, and the estimation in which he was held by foreign contemporaries, all show.

"A Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time, wherein the tenets of the principal sects, especially of the Independents, are drawn together, &c., and examined by the touchstone of the Holy Scriptures," by Robert Baillie, 1645. Baillie, after holding more than one professorship, was principal of Glasgow College, and, like his two preceding brethren, was a member of the Westminster Assembly. He was a master in languages, being able to claim acquaintance with ten or twelve of them. Learned in chronology, theology, &c., he stood high in the estimation of the most distinguished Continental scholars and divines, such as Salmasius, Spanheim, Leusden, &c.

"A Brief Refutation of the Errors of Toleration, Erastianism, Independency, and Separation," by James Fergusson of Kilwinning, written in 1652, but published in 1692.

James Wood, professor of theology at St. Andrews, published "An Examination and Refutation of Lockyer's Lecture on the Visible Church, in defence of Presbytery, and against Independency," in 1654.

In the same period Presbyterian ministers in London and England published,

"Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici, or Divine Right o. Church Government Asserted and Evidenced by the Holy Scriptures," &c., &c., by sundry ministers of Christ within the city of London. A small quarto.

"Smectymnus, an Answer to a Humble Remonstrance, 1646, in which the original of Liturgy and Episcopacy is discussed, the parity of Bishops and Presbyters in Scripture demonstrated, the antiquity of Ruling Elders in the Church vindicated, &c., &c., by five learned and orthodox Divines." This was an answer to Bishop Hall's "Defence of the Church of England." The authors were, Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spurston, whose initials make up the title.

"A Vindication of the Presbyterial Government and Ministry, by the Ministers and Elders met in Provincial Assembly, November 1649." Small quarto, London, 1650.

"The Good Old Way Defended, &c., wherein the Divine

Right of the Government of the Church by Presbyters acting in parity, is Asserted," &c., by Gilbert Rule, principal of the College of Edinburgh, 1697. He was the author of various pamphlets in defence of Presbytery against Episcopacy, after the Restoration.

"Nazianzeni Querela et Votum Justum: the Fundamentals of the Hierarchy Examined and Disproved," by William Jameson, lecturer of history in the University of Glasgow, 1697.

"Cyprianus Isotimus, or J. S.'s (John Sage, a Scottish Episcopal bishop) Vindication of his Principles of the Cyprianic Age Confuted," &c., by the same author, 1705.

"The Sum of the Episcopal Controversy, as it is Pleaded from the Holy Scriptures," &c., &c., by the same, 1713.

Jameson must have been a remarkable man. His works are full of learning, and yet he was blind. This is beautifully referred to by him, in the conclusion of his "Nazianzenzi."

"The Hierarchical Bishops' Claim to a Divine Right, Tried at the Scripture Bar" (in answer to three authors, two of them bishops), "the whole issuing in a clear discerning of the solid grounds of Presbyterian Government, in opposition to Prelacy," by Principal Forrester of St. Andrews. Quarto, 1669. The same author, though his name is not given, published in a thick quarto a "Review and Consideration of two Pamphlets, &c., in confutation of Bishop Sage on the Cyprianic Age," 1706. The same author, at an earlier day, 1684, anonymously published, "Rectius Instruendum, containing a Confutation of Episcopacy, and Vindication of the Truth, owned by the true Protestant and Presbyterian Church of Scotland." Currie, in his "Vindication," states that Forrester was the author.

"The Divine Institution of Bishops having Churches consisting of many Congregations, Examined by Scripture," by Alex. Lauder, minister of Mordington, 1711. The same author published "The Jurisdiction and Power of the Ancient Bishops Considered," in answer to Chillingworth, 1707.

"Defence of the Church Government, Faith, Worship, and Spirit, of the Presbyterians," by Anderson, minister of Dumbarton, and afterwards first minister of the Ramshorn Church, Glasgow, 1704. Here may added, "A Plea for Scripture Ordination, or Ten Arguments from Scripture and Antiquity proving Ordination by Presbyters without Bishops to be Valid," by J. O. (James Owen, a Dissenting minister), prefaced by Rev. Daniel Williams, 1694.

"The Original Constitution of the Christian Church,

wherein the Extremes on either hand are Stated and Examined; to which is added, an Appendix, containing the rise of the Jure Divino Prelatists, and an answer to their Arguments by Episcopal Divines," by T. A. (Thomas Ayton), minister of the gospel at Alyth, 1730.

"A Clear Account of the Ancient Episcopacy, proving it to have been Parochial, and therefore inconsistent with the present Model of Diocesan Episcopacy, wherein the several Pretensions of the Divine Right of the latter are fully Examined," by Joseph Boyse of Dublin. *Vide* Works, 1726.

The works of the excellent Willison of Dundee may here be referred to. His views on Episcopacy are contained in his Letter from "A Parochial Bishop to a Prelatical Gentleman;" his views on Independency in his controversy with John Glas.

"A Humble Attempt to Exhibit a Scriptural View of the Constitution, Order, Discipline, and Fellowship of the Gospel Church," by Archibald Hall. London, 1795.

"A Short Vindication of Presbyterial Church Government, containing a Summary View of the Evidence in Support of it from Scripture, together with an Examination of the Principal Arguments of the Independents against it," by George Whytock, of the Associate Congregation, Dalkeith. 1799.

"Letters on the Constitution, Government, and Discipline of the Christian Church," by John Brown of Haddington, 1799.

"A Vindication of the Presbyterian Form of Church Government, as professed in the Standards of the Church of Scotland, in reply to the Animadversions of Modern and Ancient Independents," by Rev. John Brown of Gartmore (now Dr. Brown of Langton), 1805.

"Presbyterian Letters, addressed to Bishop Skinner of Aberdeen, on his Vindication of Primitive Truths and Order," &c., by Dr. Mitchell of Kemnay, 1809.

"Presbyterianism Defended," 1839, and

"Plea of Presbytery," &c., &c., both by Ministers of the General Synod of Ulster, 1841.

Several of the authors above named have published others which it would have been too tedious to mention, but which the reader, with those given, will have little difficulty in finding. Perhaps to the list might be added a work of the great Dr. Owen, entitled "An Inquiry into the Original Nature, Institution, Power, Order, and Communion, of Evangelical Churches, with an Answer to Dr. Stillingfleet." Quarto, 1681. Though not strictly a Presbyterian book, yet it is a powerful exposure of the claims of Prelacy, and is written with a freedom and ease unusual in many of the works of Owen.

There is a posthumous little work by David Clarkson, published in London in 1688, entitled "Primitive Episcopacy Stated and Cleared from the Holy Scriptures and Ancient Records." The object is to show, and it is done with great learning, that the Primitive Episcopacy was not an *oversight* of a number of pastors, as Prelatists allege, but of a single congregation. Various treatises, bearing more or less on the same controversy, have been republished by the Wickliffe Society, the production of the same author.

Of modern American works, by far the most important which I have seen, bears the title of

"Letters concerning the Constitution and Order of the Christian Ministry, addressed to the Members of the Presbyterian Churches in the City of New York," &c., &c., by Dr. Miller of Princeton. Large octavo, 2d edition, Philadelphia, 1830.

The Letters are by the same author as the little treatise which is now republished, and are of a very high character. What adds to their value is, that they most satisfactorily discuss the pretensions of the new Anglican School in the Church of England, in a controversy which Dr. Miller held with similar parties in America in 1807.

"An Ecclesiastical Catechism: being a Series of Questions relative to the Scriptural Authority of the Presbyterian Form of Church Government." By Alexander M'Leod, D.D., pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, New York. Republished by Johnstone, Edinburgh.

The Rev. Dr. Smyth of Charleston has recently published various important works in defence of Presbytery and against High Church Prelacy.

A little useful work has been published by Dr. Barnes, trying Episcopacy solely upon scriptural grounds. It has been reprinted in London, while one of Dr. Smyth's has been reprinted by Mr. Collins of Glasgow.

Since the above was written, Dr. James Buchanan of Edinburgh has published valuable Tracts, and Dr. Alexander an able volume on Apostolic Succession.

Dr. King of Glasgow, and Dr. M'Kerrow of the United Presbyterian Church, have published useful volumes on the Eldership, which so far vindicate an important part of the Presbyterian Constitution.

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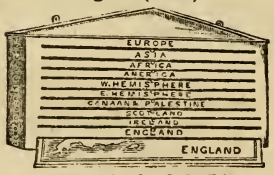

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